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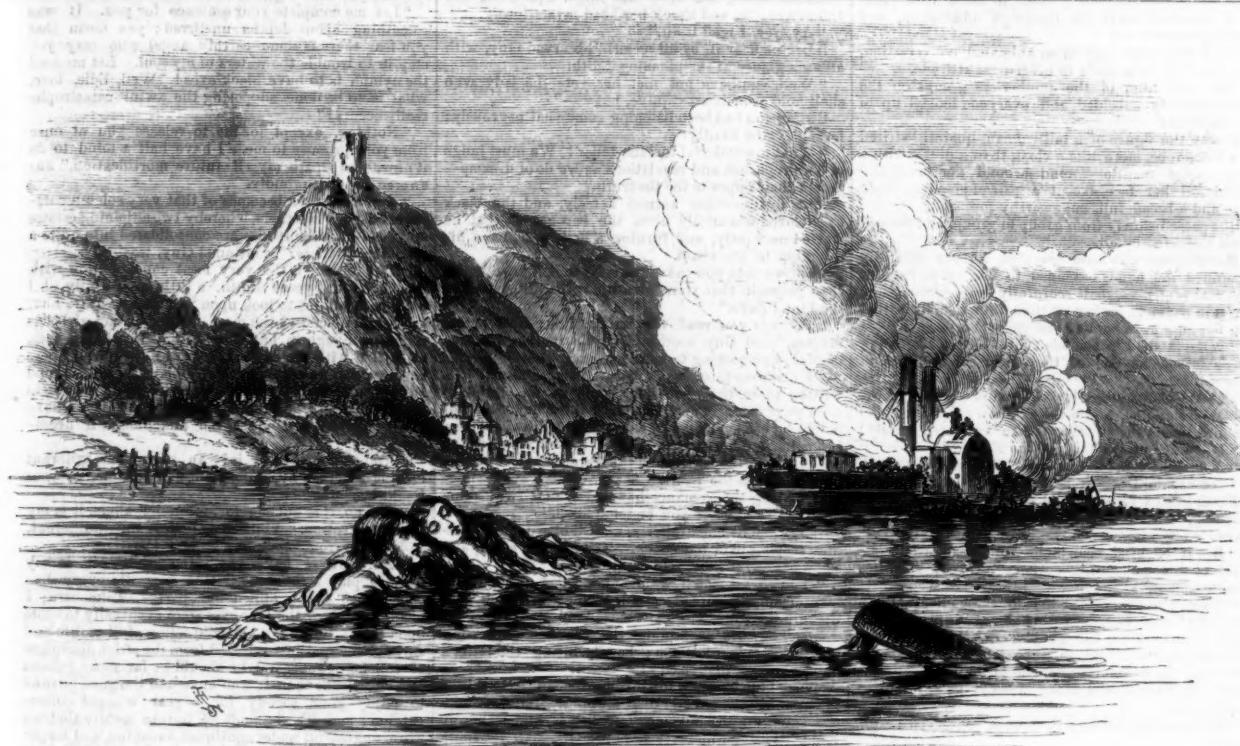
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[THE RESCUE.]

THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF THE RHINE.

CHAPTER I.

The little steamer glided along so noiselessly and smoothly over the blue, sun-kissed waves, which dimpled into myriad sparkling responsive smiles, that it seemed rather wafted downwards by the breath of a zephyr than propelled by the tireless wheels. It was one of those glorious days which seem doubly delightful upon the Rhine.

On either shore rose the greenly wooded heights which, though inferior in height to the mountains of the Rhone, yet appear so much more majestic and grand. Now the beautiful river flowed broad and wide, seeming more like a succession of lakes, with their lofty craggy mountains ranged like giants all around to bar its daring encroachment, and anon the channel narrowed, and the foaming waves went surging angrily along the surly steepness of the precipitous cliffs, crowned here and there with old romantic castles, ivy-hung and desolate.

The steamer's decks were crowned with the admiring passengers and tourists passing from Mayence to Cologne.

Among them was a party of English people, who kept in a little group by themselves. Two young men, an elderly, aristocratic-looking gentleman with grey hair, but jetty beard, a middle-aged lady, very gentle and sweet looking, and a fresh, blooming maiden of seventeen. They all bore that unmistakable stamp of good breeding which proclaimed their belonging to the upper class, notwithstanding their very plain and inexpensive clothing. The younger portion were enthusiastically awake to the attractions of the scenes, which like a panorama constantly moved away from them.

The elders were more quiet, nay, it would seem the lady was pensive, and the gentleman fairly gloomy.

"Oh, Aunt Hester, this is really the Rheingean! how lovely, how lovely! You have seen it before; has it changed? has it lost its beauty for you?" said Edith

Meredith, tossing back the wave of rippling brown hair which the wind cajoled from the confinement of her bonnet, and looking questioningly into her aunt's face.

The Hon. Mrs. Owen sighed softly while she answered:

"I fancy, my love, that it is not the scene, but I myself that have changed. I was young and gay when I sailed down the Rhine for the first time; my husband was with me, and, like you, I was too delighted to keep silence. I was overflowing with joy. Edith, darling, don't let it sadden your joy, as it does mine, to remember that I am now a widow, and old enough to have lost the enthusiastic buoyancy which changes this journey into a fairy pastime."

Edith clasped her little gloved hand tenderly over that of her much-beloved aunt, and for a little while was grave and silent. But the novelty of her situation and her keen enjoyment of it, soon dispersed the momentary sadness.

She turned to her youthful cousin, Guy Mordaunt, who leaned against the iron railing, scarcely moving his eyes from the shore.

"How still you all are. Why, Guy, I think you have scarcely spoken this half-hour. Am I alone in the idiosyncrasy that the more I am delighted, the faster I like to talk?"

"In truth, you are not, Edith; here's one exception at least," interrupted the other youth with a merry laugh. "Now you've paved the way, I needn't be afraid to own I've wanted to indulge in a score of breathless perorations, but having somewhere read about the terrible bore of a loquacious companion in romantic scenes, I've kept silence, at the risk of losing my tongue through numbness."

"I don't see then but you are both provided for," replied Guy, with a smile; "if all the rest of us are reticent, you can talk to each other and relieve your minds. I believe I had fallen into a queer kind of reverie. I was looking back, and piercing into the future, as well as enjoying the present."

"I don't see what you could have in the past to be suggested by the Rhine, since this is your first visit, and your years are hardly advanced enough to afford

theme for moralizing or philosophizing," returned Ralph Owen, the nephew of Mrs. Owen's departed husband; moreover, lucky dog that you are, your future seems as auspicious and clearly shadowed forth as mortal could expect."

As he spoke, Ralph cast a quick, rueful sort of glance into the face of Edith, who blushed, smiled a little unconsciously, and half turned away.

"Yes, I suppose so," answered Guy, rather listlessly, although he had watched Edith with an affectionate smile.

"I suppose so!" echoed Ralph, indignantly. "You don't half appreciate your blessings, Guy. Ordinary people have to be thankful if they have health, are not deformed, nor lacking some mental gift. But here are you, with a personal comeliness many men, rich and poor, would be wild about, nobly gifted in intellect, and crowned with all favours; the only son of a noble house, heir to a large estate, and—above all, crowned by love, with his highest gift, his choicest treasure."

Edith had quite averted her head during this speech, and seemed entirely absorbed with the shore, but that she had caught its meaning might be guessed by the blush which reddened so deeply the line of cheek visible.

"You are right, Ralph. I am an ungrateful fellow; most of all for the dear little creature who is to be my wife; and, raising his voice, he said, tenderly, "Edith, dear, we approach Johannisberg. Come and tell me if you will recognize it if I make you a sketch from memory?"

The young lady turned, but there was a half-pout on her lip and a trifling pettishness in her manner.

"Do you really care to have me talk to you, Guy? I thought you were too absorbed in your reverie."

He laughed as he drew her towards the railing.

"Now, Edie, there's no use in your trying to seem angry—you don't know how it's done. I trust that sweet disposition of yours is to be the blessing of my life, so pray don't try to warp it. Oh, see that noble cliff, and those ruins; what are they, of chapel or castle?"

She was only half mollified, but gave eager attention to the designated spot.

"It is a castle; there is a romantic legend connected with it. I shall tell it to you presently, Miss Edith," observed Ralph, coming to them.

Edith smiled graciously.

It was an agreeable reflection that however thoughtless and indifferent her betrothed Guy might be, his friend was ever ready to attend to her wants, to give response to her slightest gesture, to show in a thousand nameless ways his thorough admiration, and hopeless attachment.

They were soon busy in an animated conversation, and Guy fell back again to his listless attitude.

The busy hum of the numberless groups on the deck suddenly subsided, and everyone looked up to see the cause.

It was the figure of a tall woman, quaintly attired in a loose robe, more like a cloak than a dress, with a long scarlet mantle wound around her head and hiding all her face, except a pair of piercing black eyes and a broad, full, but awfully forehead.

She passed slowly from group to group, and seemed to be respected by all.

Her purpose was soon revealed, for she carefully examined the hands extended to her, uttered some few mystical sentences, half-scornfully dropped the coin, given in payment for her services, into a small leather bag hanging at her waist, and passed on.

"Who is she?" demanded Sir Morton Mordaunt, Guy's father, as one of the officers of the steamer passed him.

The German paused, looked around to discover the person designated, and making a bow of reverence to the direction of the strange woman, answered hastily:

"It is the Fortune-teller of the Rhine?"

"A fortune-teller! how delightful; pray let us all test her capabilities," exclaimed Ralph Owen.

Edith looked pleased, and a little fluttered. Guy, yawning, withdrew his eyes reluctantly from the shore.

"Let it be brief then; one cannot afford to lose much of this enchanting scenery for such profitless entertainment," said he.

"There's a chance for her to show her skill in our party," observed Sir Morton; "vague allusions will apply to none of us; her guesses must hit directly, or fail short entirely. But will she deliver her oracle in German? In which case we can all interpret according to our wishes, as I fancy none of us brilliant at translation."

"We shall see, for here she comes," observed Ralph, eagerly.

The fortune-teller moved towards them with a slow and stately step. Despite their incredulity, she impressed them to receive her deferentially.

The gleaming eye ran over the faces of the party calmly, and then fixed itself upon the leader, Sir Morton.

"The good people are English, I will speak French," was her first salutation; "will the noble gentlemen learn of their future from the Rhine sybil?"

"The past gives a surer evidence of your skill, my good woman," said Sir Morton; "let us try you there first."

He held out his hand, half-ashamed of his complaisance. She bent down her scarlet-mantled head, and that black eye seemed burning with a fierce, lurid light, as it searched that soft, womanly hand.

Raising her head almost with a jerk, she asked, coldly:

"Shall I read aloud what is written here?"

"Why not?" answered the baronet, loftily.

"Because it is not a pleasant record—the lines are knotted strangely; there are fraud, deceit, dishonour in your history."

Sir Morton stared at her, seemingly so annoyed at her audacity that for a moment he became deprived of speech.

"The guilty prosper over a hidden secret, the innocent are foully wronged. Whose death brought all this confusion?"

The words were spoken in a high monotonous tone, and the glittering, burning eye was on the baronet's face.

Sir Morton hastily jerked his hand from her touch, and with a contemptuous word turned away.

"As much in the tragical style as ever; it would gain more credence to have a variety once in a while," sneered he, as he flung down a piece of money; yet his cheek had lost all trace of colour and his hand shook.

The sybil did not seem in the least disturbed, but moved along to Guy.

He had watched the change in his father's face with perplexity, but with a cheery smile held out his hand.

She took it slowly, and then pored over it, seemingly profoundly absorbed thereby.

"It is a fair fate, a very fair fate. The black cloud

that hangs so threateningly over the sire, does not so much as darken a line here. The stars smile propitiously."

"She is not so much at fault as she might be," laughed Ralph Owen. "Learned sybil, there's plenty more for you to say. You have not touched upon the all-important theme."

"That, for the young is always love. Ay, eye, it is here in this very line."

As she spoke, she drew her finger-tips along the transverse line, and shook her head mysteriously.

"Ay, yes, I read it all."

"Let us hear it, by all means," observed Guy, with an arch glance at the blushing Edith.

"Well, you have not met her yet—the lady who shall hold your heart captive, but—"

Sir Morton had been listening somewhat nervously; he spoke now hastily:

"What a wonderful fortune-teller! We must judge of her prophecies and revelations as we do of dreams—accept them opposite for the truth."

The fortune-teller turned fiercely, and the black eyes blazed wrathfully upon the baronet, so that he started nervously, and, turning a little pale, gave his attention to the shore.

"I have told you the truth. No one knows better than yourself that your own life will correspond to the hint I gave."

"Perhaps you read the wrong line; look again, madam," said Guy, soothingly, believing her a monomaniac, and seeking to calm her excitement.

"I make no mistakes," answered she, coldly; "it is written there, that you have come to the Rhine to meet your fate. There is a false tie somewhere, but it will be broken as easily as a wisp of straw. There is a calm, brotherly attachment; it will seem as the cold drifts of the Alps when the warm lava tide of true passion thrills the heart. A pair of dark eyes, somewhere along the romance-haunted Rhine, will shine upon you, and leave you under a spell."

Edith had listened eagerly, a flush of wounded feeling creeping over her cheek. Guy perceived it, and as he handed his fee, said carelessly:

"You've made a few mistakes, good woman; my love destiny, is already decided—they are blue eyes that are my stars."

She had been examining the gratified expression upon the face of Ralph; hastily lifting the latter's hand, she repeated, firmly:

"The blue eyes are for this gentleman. He thinks his path bewildered and discouraging. Let him take courage; it leads out into fair scenes, and a happy issue. The one he loves so hopelessly shall yet smile tenderly upon him. A magical touch shall smooth out the knotted strands. Take note of my words—you will all see them verified."

Saying which, she turned around, and looked questioningly into Edith's face.

"Shall I read the lady's destiny?"

"No, no!" cried Edith, hiding her hands, as if she expected them to be seized forcibly.

"I would not hear mine for anything!"

They all laughed, in spite of the embarrassment which had fallen upon them.

Mrs. Owen shook her head, and the strange woman walked swiftly away, and disappeared in the crowd on the other deck.

Our party were left ill at ease. Sir Morton, leaning heavily on the railing, gazed down into the sparkling waves.

His son, looking extremely vexed, cast alternate glances towards the romantic shore and at Edith's averted face.

The young lady was deeply moved, and it required all her efforts to choke down the rising sob, and to thrust back the tears which threatened to overflow her flushed cheeks.

Only Ralph seemed contented with the sybil's predictions.

His eyes shone brightly, and there was a little gleeful triumph hovering around his lips, although he forebore to give it expression.

At Coblenz the steamer made for the wharf to receive and disembark passengers, and, it must be acknowledged, it was with a feeling of relief our party saw, among the crowd leaving the steamer, the tall, black-cloaked, scarlet-hooded figure of the fortune-teller.

CHAPTER II.

"Our oracle has departed. I can't say I grieve for it," exclaimed Guy, shaking himself, and then stepping over to the side of his betrothed, he whispered, archly, "I hope this dear little Edie hasn't been silly enough to lay to heart the absurd, ridiculous prophecy of an arrogant impostor."

She looked into his face timidly, a sparkle of tears gushing over the blue eyes.

"Somehow it seems to carry a deep conviction with it. I can't throw it off; and Guy—"

She paused, hesitating, not knowing how far she might venture in what she longed to say.

"Say on, dear Edith," said Guy, with a roguish smile.

"It really has sometimes seemed to me that it was a little true what she said, that you like me well enough, just as you might, for our relationship's sake, for we are almost cousins, you know, but that there are depths in your heart unstirred as yet, but which—ah, you are laughing at me."

"Let me complete your sentence for you. It was something about depths unstirred; you mean that you fear there is some earthly angel who may yet step in to trouble the waters of my soul. Let me see! the nymph is to have black eyes! Well, Edie, love, what is to be done supposing the awful catastrophe really occurs?"

"Nothing, except for me to release you at once from your promise to me. I have half a mind to do it now, and spare myself future mortification," answered the girl, proudly.

"And what then becomes of that very solemn compact made by our fathers, whereby two adjoining estates and comfortable fortunes are consolidated into quite a magnificent affair?" continued Guy, teasingly.

"The fortune is the very least consideration with me, Guy," answered Edith, a little resentfully. "I have been taught to look upon you as my future husband, and of course the most matter-of-fact girl has romance enough in her composition to glorify such a relation with the halo of fancy. You have always been so kind and affectionate, I have been so proud of your talents, and real goodness, I could not help loving you very dearly, Guy, but I assure you I have pride enough to conquer the attachment if necessary."

"And who says it is? an unknown, ignorant fortune-teller! why, Edie, I am half ashamed of your weakness."

"No, no, it is not the fortune-teller alone, it is my own observation. You are as listless and indifferent, so different from—"

"Ah, now I have you, Miss Edith; it is my turn to play Mentor. All this new discovery has come since Ralph joined our party. Take care; I recall now, how the blue eyes were eventually to smile upon him. Ralph is a splendid fellow, full of life and enthusiasm. And just released from the strict discipline of college, *à la nature* he should be far more gallant and chivalrous than I, who have had the good fortune to enjoy your society for a year without interruption; and it's the fault of human nature that we grow ungrateful under continued sunshine, and forget what a blessing it is until its withdrawal is threatened. Perhaps I have been selfishly absorbed in the emotions attendant upon our travelling experience. I beg your pardon, dear Edie, and propose that we enter into an agreement to be satisfied with each other while we can, and if either at length finds a more powerful attraction, to confess it freely. What say you?"

The tears still stood in her eyes, but she smiled gently in response.

"Meanwhile you understand, my dearest Edith, that certainly, for the present, you stand first and entirely supreme in my affections."

Her smile was quite joyous now.

"Thank you for that assurance, Guy; that is what I am afraid of, that you will come to find someone to step before me, and yet hide it from me."

"We have entered into the agreement now. We will please our parents if we can, without doing violence to our own feelings; otherwise, we will not hesitate to declare our reluctance. It is for you, as well as for me, you understand," and he cast an expressive glance towards Ralph, who just out of hearing, was watching them impatiently.

He blushed crimson.

"Ah, I like him very much, he is so lively and entertaining; he is exceedingly agreeable, but you—you are my Guy, to whom I was betrothed when a little girl."

The tone was eloquent with tenderness. Guy smiled back, and whispered:

"There is no fear for either of us, I think. I know you are my own beloved Edith."

Mrs. Owen had given due heed to this earnest conversation, and was not a little relieved at the cheerful, happy faces which were turned towards her, as the pair returned to her bench.

If Ralph bit his lip, and mentally pronounced himself the most unlucky dog in creation, no one else was aware of the disagreeable fact. Conversation was gaily resumed, and went on with unflagging interest, for, when Guy Mordaunt aroused himself, no one could be more brilliant or delightful. Even Sir Morton presently shook off the cloud, and smiled cheerfully again. And so the chill produced by the fortune-teller's unlucky advent passed away.

As they neared Cologne the river emerged from a mountainous defile and widened again. Almost every-

one on board came out upon deck to enjoy the increasing loveliness of the scenery.

All was animation and hilarity, when suddenly a great commotion was observed among the crew, and the officers of the boat were seen running hastily about. No apprehension was aroused, however, until a great volume of black smoke suddenly whirled across the deck. It was followed by another, and another, and then came an explosion. The little boat quivered like a wounded creature, gave one lurch, as one wild shriek went leaping from a hundred throats, and swung back a helpless wreck at the mercy of the tide.

That, however, was not the worst. The smoke increased. A myriad tongues of flame were licking up the woodwork around the engine-room where the disaster originated, and defied the efforts of the few left of the crew not mangled by the flying fragments or scalded by the rush of steam.

Consternation and a terrible panic seized the passengers. The commander had no coolness, and no control over his men. He went tearing around, vociferating commands impossible to execute, and frantically shouting that all was lost.

"Where are the boats?" demanded our Englishmen, sternly, seizing him, one on either side, trying to bring him to his senses.

He could only groan:

"We have only one of any account. Who could have believed this would happen? It is years and years since there has been an explosion on the Rhine! Mein Gott! I am ruined!"

"Why don't you get that out, you cowardly knave?" cried Guy, his eyes flashing eagerly as he saw the frightened crowd swaying to and fro.

The current was more rapid than usual on account of the swollen state of the river, and the locality was just in its broadest place; nevertheless, but for the panic, it had been quite possible to save every soul.

With Sir Morton's help, the boat was lowered, but a score of frantic wretches leaping in, it capsized and floated out of reach, though two or three brave fellows swam in pursuit.

Sir Morton made his way back to his friends, who were waiting for him anxiously, the great flakes of fire falling all around them.

"They will not get the boat back in season," exclaimed Guy. "The fire gains inconceivably fast; we must try the water, father."

"I suppose so. Where are the people on the shore?" demanded he, eagerly.

"If we were nearer Cologne, the help would come more promptly. It is nothing very terrible, Edie—don't look so frightened. You know what a stout swimmer I am. Be careful to jump where you will clear the fragments, and I will be ready to catch you. You will not need any help, father?"

"I should think not," answered Sir Morton, indignant. "I shall take Hester myself. I dare not trust you, Ralph. I was a famous swimmer once." He spoke rapidly, but calmly, to reassure the trembling ladies, and threw off his coat.

"I will keep beside you to render assistance to whichever may need it," observed Ralph, even then enviously watching Guy's arm thrown protectively around Edith's waist.

"Remember, Edith, you are to be courageous, and follow, the moment I strike the water. It would be only sport were we freed from these horrible accessories. Now, darling, I am going."

But she clung to him frantically.

"Guy, Guy, I shall never have courage to jump. If there were only a rope I could hold by."

He looked annoyed, but cast a hurried glance around. A coil of rope lay with one end smoking, but the rest unharmed. It was suffocatingly hot now, and showers of sparks fell blindingly around them, but Guy plunged towards the great seething flame, and made a dash for the rope. The plank gave way beneath his feet, already eaten from below by the greedy element. A desperate spring saved him from falling into the fiery gulf below, but with that plank followed a general crushing in, and he stood alone amidst the furnace heat, completely separated from his friends. He heard Edith's shriek, and his father's frantic call, and relieved their fears by a cheery halloo, for the cloud of smoke intervened and hid them from his sight.

Guy was still self-possessed and calm, the terrors which drove the German passengers frantic had no power over him; he had sported with the water from his boyhood, and knew how much he might rely on his swimming proficiency, notwithstanding the distant shore and the steady current.

As the smoke cleared away a moment, he saw Ralph seize Edith in his arms, and leap over.

"All right," ejaculated Guy, and plunged after them. A floating stanchion, with the awning rope still

attached to it, for a moment or two embarrassed his movements, and in the thickly strewed water he lost sight of his friends.

"No matter, they are safe, beyond question; and behold! the shores are really at last alive to what has happened; though with German deliberateness, they are actually coming in boats to the rescue."

He flung out his vigorous strokes, exulting to find that he could overpower the current. In a little time, however, he was glad to rest, and use only enough exertion to keep him stationary.

It was then he noticed a long bench drifting towards him with a woman clinging desperately to it.

Her drooping head and whole attitude betrayed that her strength was nearly exhausted.

With the chivalrous generosity of his nature, Guy steered his course towards her.

"Your strength is nearly spent," said he, in what he was well aware was horrible German, but being the best he could muster, he had no cause for self-reproach; "allow me to assist you, madame."

She turned her face towards him, which had hitherto been concealed by a crimson scarf tied around her head and flapping over her face.

"Good heavens! what a wonderful face," mentally ejaculated Guy, as his eye fell upon those delicate spiritual features, and met the imploring glance of those soft, and yet magnificently black eyes.

"I can speak French or English, sir. I am indeed fearfully weak," answered the lady, for such Guy knew she was, after the first word she had spoken in his own tongue; native refinement, high cultivation, and a look of intellectual superiority, being as legibly written on her face as were youth and beauty.

"Allow me to assist you, mademoiselle. I am quite strong, and an excellent swimmer."

"Oh, monsieur, I shall be so grateful—that is, if you can do it, and save yourself too."

"Certainly I can."

He caught hold of the bench with one hand and threw the other arm around her waist.

"We will rest a few moments, if you please, that I may recruit my strength, then we must abandon your ark of safety hitherto, and strike out for the shore."

"I see; it was that which first discouraged me. I perceived that I was all the time drifting in the middle of the stream, and was not likely to be carried ashore."

"Were you separated from your friends?" asked Guy.

"I was unattended; my relatives left the boat at the last stopping-place, it was so little farther to Cologne. I never dreamed of danger, or need of attendance."

"And how did you leave the boat? You must, indeed, have been terribly startled, all alone amidst that horrible scene."

"I was very much frightened, but I saw how the frantic terror of those poor creatures caused their greatest harm, and I forced myself to be steady. No one would answer my inquiries or direct me how to proceed; but I watched those I believed to be the coolest, and followed their example. I threw off my shawl and bonnet, tied my scarf around my head, and dragged this bench to the side, and pushed it over somehow."

"What, you alone? What courage you must have shown!" exclaimed Guy, gazing admiringly upon the pale, expressive face.

She smiled just a moment, giving a faint hint of the wondrous loveliness the countenance must exhibit in joyous and propitious circumstances.

"It was very necessary, certainly. I confess to a great deal of inward quailing before I could make up my mind to leap into the water. But a shower of fire gave me strength. My dress caught fire and away I dashed."

She caught her breath, grew still more waxy pale, and added, shudderingly:

"I can't imagine how anyone can dive for pleasure. My sensations were horrible. I thought I was strangling, but my hands clenched the log of the bench with desperate strength, and presently I was relieved, but I have been growing weaker and weaker. I think the water has chilled me a little."

Her voice faltered, and her head drooped again.

"You are faint!" cried Guy, in alarm.

"A little, but I will overcome it in a moment."

"Leave your hold of the bench, and let me support you," cried Guy, authoritatively. She obeyed, and presently said, more energetically:

"I am better now. Please show me how I can receive support from you, without embarrassing your progress?"

He did so, and she obeyed implicitly.

"You are a heroine!" exclaimed Guy between his vigorous strokes, and at the same moment he thought of Edith, how, even amidst his assuring words, she had shrunk back and perilled his life for the sake of the assistance of the rope, although, indeed, he was generous enough to acknowledge the danger for him never occurred to his betrothed.

So the slender arms clung to his shoulder, the pale, pale face floated along on the water, the scarf long ago had given way, and now the long silky tresses of glossy blackness swayed around her, clinging heavily to the throat which gleamed ivory white in the waves; the delicate features looked so cold and white, the thought occurred to Guy that he was bearing to the shore some wondrously beautiful statue, grandly calm amidst its iciness, with the mysterious Greek inspiration of the old artists.

Not a single murmur, no expression of terror or despair had yet escaped her, but his sidelong glance showed him that the long black eyelash clung closer to the ashy white cheek, the pallid lips wore an expression of patient suffering; her clasp grew weaker. He knew she was sinking rapidly from exhaustion. Hastily flinging one arm about her, he supported himself with the other, and looked around for help.

He saw a boat not far away, and lifted his voice in a loud halloo.

The boat perceived them, and came dashing along towards them.

"Thank heaven! Safety is at hand," cried Guy.

"I shall owe my life to you," said she, recovering under the cheering intelligence, "how impossible it is that I should repay you."

"I would not try; there is no occasion."

"Yes, it is useless to try; because the debt is overwhelming; it is hopeless to attempt to express my gratitude."

"A single movement of your lips can cancel it," cried Guy, cheerily, for he perceived a faint return of colour to her face, and heard the splash of the oars.

"I know not what possesses me, but a strange caprice has seized me; it is all so peculiar, this meeting of ours you seem so like a nymph of the wave granted to my sight a moment, to vanish away again, that I seem to need some tangible token of mortality. You will grant me a greater favour than I have given you if you will kiss me on this meeting and parting, on the Rhine, emphatically, and literally."

He smiled half saucily and yet with a certain respectfulness of expression, and earnestness of manner. He saw those beautiful eyes widen with surprise at the ridiculous request, the faintest possible tinge of pink glow on the pale cheek, and then fade away, and heard the low excusing murmur.

"He says truly, we meet to part; how churlish to refuse under the circumstances."

And the next moment the dainty lips swept a perfumed touch across his own.

"Bear a hand; lift the lady first," shouted a voice close at hand.

The boat had reached them. They were lifted into it, and shivering as the air struck upon their drenched garments, sat down beside three other rescued passengers.

Guy tried to find something to wrap around his delicate companion, but saw nothing. A gold piece produced from the soaking contents of his pockets, however, speedily induced one of the boatmen to divest himself of his rough, but dry and warm jerkin.

Nevertheless, before they reached the shore, she had fainted. While he urged the rowers to greater speed, Guy supported the slender figure, and chased eagerly the gracefully shaped arms and hands.

A strange sensation thrilled his heart. Reaching the shore, he leaped out, shouted vociferously for a carriage, which was answered by a peasant's cart, which was quite as thankfully accepted, and away they jolted to the nearest shelter, which happened to be the peasant driver's own cottage.

A pleasant-faced woman took the management away from Guy, by deliberately carrying, in her own stout arms, the insensible girl to another room.

The master of the house meanwhile suggested to Guy that his own dripping clothes needed removal, which a chill shaking him from head to foot duly enforced.

In a few moments other drowning unfortunates made their appearance. The shore was thronged with gazers and sufferers.

The blazing steamer had spread the warning far and wide.

Charging the peasants to give all possible attention to the young lady, Guy, as soon as he had transferred himself to the poor man's holiday suit, now for the first time remembering that he had friends of his own, went out to learn what had become of his party.

He had no apprehensions at first, because knowing the coolness and dexterity of his father and Ralph, but as his anxious inquiries found no relief, his heart began to misgive him.

From his own experience he had learned how difficult it was for the strongest swimmer to support another.

Anxiety grew into positive alarm, when his fears were set at rest by hearing Ralph leap forth from a newly arrived boat, and begin earnest inquiries about a young Englishman, who was on the burning steamer.

Guy hurried up to meet him. They seized each other by the hand.

"Thank heaven, Guy, you are safe."

"And so are the rest, I trust."

"Oh, yes; we were picked up in a little while, but I should have reached the shore myself, only poor Edith was so frightened she struggled, and made it impossible for me to get along. She nearly fainted three or four times."

"She is not ill, I hope?"

"Oh, no; the moment she reached the shore she was herself again."

Guy thought of one who bore up until safety was secured, and then sank away, and was silent.

"What does my father say?"

"He was quite frantic about you. He has gone down the river, and I came this way in search of you. Our directions were to take what conveyance was possible and get on to Cologne, and all meet there at the hotel. We had better go now to relieve the apprehensions of the ladies."

"I have left my clothing down at the cottage in that little valley. It will take some time for it to dry, and means of replenishing will hardly be found till we reach Cologne. You had better proceed to escort the ladies, and save my father farther alarm. I will follow to Cologne at the earliest possible moment."

"Very well. By the way, Guy, how did you escape?"

"Picked up, pretty well exhausted too," answered Guy, not disposed to be communicative.

"How's that? I think I could swim it very comfortably alone."

"The current is stronger than you think, and I was not alone."

"Oh, did you pick up some of those frightened creatures? A woman, I suppose?"

"Yes," answered Guy, reluctantly.

His manner struck Ralph.

"Hullo!" cried he, "I say, Guy, was she young, and did she have black eyes? because the old fortune-teller wasn't so far out of the way in that case."

The idea had not occurred to Guy before. He turned crimson, and wheeled around to hide it from his friend's railing.

But Ralph went off laughing.

(To be continued.)

WE CAN IF WE WILL.

"I ADMIT that Ruth is quick-tempered, and that she often says things she does not mean."

It was Hannah Cleaves who spoke, and she was defending her young and pretty cousin, who had been not quite two years the wife of Charles Gray.

"Still," said Susan Adams, another cousin, "I must say that she is much to blame. Her husband is one of the kindest and best of men, and I know that she often makes him unhappy. She might do differently if she would."

"I am not sure of that," returned Hannah. "She is not to blame for the disposition which was born in her. She cannot help her own nature. No two of us are exactly alike in all our feelings, and we are all apt to act as we feel. It is unfortunate that some people are diseased; but I cannot say that those are to blame who have inherited their disease from their ancestors. And so it is with our dispositions."

"But," suggested Susan, "that person who has inherited a disease that works mischief, not only to herself, but all around her, is certainly to blame if she does not make any exertion to get rid of it."

"Aye," cried Hannah, "but there are diseases which cannot be got rid of; and I say that Cousin Ruth cannot be blamed for her feelings, because they come in spite of her; and when they have come, she cannot hide them."

My aunt Annie Dinsmore laid her knitting-work aside, and gravely shook her head.

"Hannah," said she, with deep solemnity, "you may at some time be a mother; and when that time comes let me urge you not to teach your children the doctrine you have been upholding here."

Aunt Annie was such a good, kind woman, and she loved us all so well, and did so much for our happiness, that even Hannah Cleaves was respectfully silent beneath the gentle reproof.

"A little while ago," our aunt went on, "you were speaking of wilful people. Now I admire strong self-will when it is bent in the right direction. The noblest of God's children are those who have strong wills. The Christian martyrs were extremely self-willed. Self-will is a beneficent force when it is made to uphold virtue and goodness. So cultivate self-will as much as you please; but make it subservient to right. I fear the trouble with Ruth Gray is, that she has no self-will. What you call self-will in her is only perverseness and inconsistency. She exercises no will at all, but is the creature of circumstance, suffering herself to be swayed to and fro by every gust of passion that sweeps across her path."

The girls made no reply, and presently Aunt Annie resumed:

"You admit that Ruth is quick-tempered, and that she often says things that she does not mean; and you claim that she cannot help her feelings, and consequently, that she is not to blame for acting as her feelings dictate.

"My dear girls, this is all wrong. I suppose I am talking to girls of sense and judgment, and not to mere machines that have no independence of thought and action.

"We are all of us subject to failings, and she is the best woman who best overcomes her failings. Real virtue consists in conquering evil. The true saint is he who has fought the good fight, and won the victory. The whole sum and substance of all that is good and true and virtuous in life may be stated in one short, simple sentence: 'We can if we will!'

"I tell you, girls," she said, "we can if we will! If we will do right, we can do right. She who practically denies this casts aside the very foundation of a virtuous character, and erects her structure of life upon a base of sand.

"I am going to tell you a story of my own life. You call me good; and I think I am good to you. At all events, I try to be so. But my goodness of temper came to me through a mighty effort of will, as you shall see.

"When I was young I was more perverse than your cousin Ruth ever was. My temper was quick and high; I was subject to fits of despondency that made all around me miserable; and I excused myself upon the plea that such was my nature—I could not help it.

"When I became the wife of Jacob Dinsmore I was very happy, and I thought myself very fortunate, for I knew that I had won for a husband one of the best young men in the town. Your uncle Jacob was then just what he is now—kind, generous, loving, forbearing, and faithful to a fault. For the first six months of our married life, I did not allow my bad temper to show itself much; but at length my honeymoon waned, and my old feelings began to manifest themselves. I became, in short, just what I was before I was married. People called me self-willed; but I had no self-will. I did not will to be cross and petulant. I was cross and petulant because I had no will to be otherwise. Sometimes I had bad feelings, and I had no will to overcome them. The slightest thing that crossed me found me so entirely devoid of will that it swayed me at its pleasure.

"At the end of two years there was more of misery than of happiness in my home; and I could not hide from myself the fact that I was the cause of it all; and yet I tried to convince myself that I was not to blame.

"When my mother talked with me I declared that I could not help it; and when my husband ventured to allude to the subject I flew into a passion. I could not bear a chiding from him. In fact, his very kindness and goodness sometimes fretted me; and when he offered to point out to me my errors it seemed as though he were preaching to me, and I would not listen.

"Girls, tell you truly when I tell you that I believe no one was ever more firmly fixed in the habit of ill-feeling than I was at that time; and I did earnestly then believe that I could not help it.

"Some time before we were married there had been a volunteer artillery company in our town, and when the company finally disbanded, Jacob was the only commissioned officer left, so he took charge of that part of the property.

"A salute was to be fired in the morning, at noon, and at sundown, of which my husband was to have charge. During the day I received an invitation to join some friends in a sail upon the river, and as I could not very well go to the landing-place alone, I asked Jacob to go with me. He said it would interfere with other duties, and he could not go.

"I asked him if he thought the firing of the salute was of more importance than the happiness of his wife; and when he had foiled me at that argument, I asked him why he could not let someone else take charge of the cannon.

"He answered me calmly and candidly that he dared not trust the gun in other hands. He was the only one who understood how to properly handle it, and he felt obliged to attend to it. He told me how many accidents had happened through mistakes of inexperienced and careless persons, and he could not neglect the duty he had promised to perform.

"That was in the afternoon. At six o'clock it came time for me to start for the boat landing if I meant to go, but I would not go unless my husband went. He had sent for a carriage, and had engaged a man to drive me down, but I would not use it. I shrank away in a fit of the sulks, and so remained until it came time for Jacob to go away with his gun. As he was putting on his hat, my temper burst forth into a wild flame, and his calm answers only maddened me.

"At length I pushed him beyond the bounds of

human endurance, and he turned upon me more sternly than he had ever before done. He did not speak angrily, but he spoke as an offended parent might have spoken to an offending child. This set my blood completely afire, and I cannot tell you all the wicked things I said.

"'Annie,' he said to me, as he stood with his hand upon the door-knob, 'it might have been better for both of us if we had never met.'

"I answered him, hotly and passionately, that I hoped we might never meet again. 'If you were dead,' said I, 'I should be happier than I am now!'

"'No, no, Annie, you do not mean that,' he replied to me.

"And I cried out that I did mean it, and I declared that I hoped I might never see him again alive. And he went away as I said those words.

"My husband went away and left me alone, and when he had gone, I sat down and cried till I was tired. By-and-bye I heard the report of the cannon, and I thought, 'Suppose some accident should happen to Jacob! Suppose he should be killed! Suppose they should bring him home dead!' As these thoughts came to me, I remembered what a good, kind husband he had been, and I also remembered how cruel and unjust I had been.

"Again and again came the booming report of the cannon, and at each report the dread grew stronger and stronger upon me. Oh, what would I have given could I have recalled the wicked words I had spoken! But they had gone forth, and I must abide the result. Heavier and heavier grew the weight upon my heart, until at length I thought I should go crazy if Jacob did not soon return.

"My crime loomed up before me, darkly and threateningly, and it seemed to me that my husband's death was to be my punishment. Oh, when would the firing cease, and when would my husband come home, that I might fall upon his neck, and ask his pardon for all the wickedness I had done!

"The firing ceased at length; but instead of hopefulness, the dread became heavier and more heavy. I was hunting for my hood, intending to go out and meet my husband, when I heard heavy feet in the yard.

"The cloud had settled down and the thunder-crash had come. Men came in and told me not to be frightened—my husband was hurt, but they hoped not seriously.

"Then other men brought my husband in upon a wide board, and I saw that his limbs were limp and lifeless, that his face was like marble, and that there was blood upon the board—blood trickling down upon the floor!

"And I heard them talk; they told me that he had been run over by the heavy gun-carriage—that in coming down the hill from whence the salute had been fired, men and boys, in wild confusion, had seized the trail-rope, and that my husband, in attempting to prevent the rush, had been knocked down and run over.

"Two doctors came. I heard them talk of a broken leg, of broken ribs, and of other injuries; and during all this time I was as one in a horrid dream, unable to move or to speak, and almost suffocating. By-and-bye I heard one of the doctors say that he would live, and then I sank down senseless.

"When I came to myself it was night, and one of my neighbours sat at my bedside. I asked for my husband, but I was told that he was asleep, and that I must not disturb him.

"In the morning I went to him, and he put up his well arm and drew me down upon the pillow and kissed me. And he told me not to worry; he was badly hurt, but if I would nurse him and love him, he would soon get well.

"Love him! Oh, my soul, how strong I felt then!—how strong in my love, and in my determination to be a true and faithful wife!"

Aunt Annie took off her spectacles and wiped her eyes, and presently she added:

"Girls, that was forty years ago, and from that day to this I have not spoken one cross word to my husband. My nature is not changed at all, but I have gained control of my will and bent it in the right direction; and when once I found how much pure joy there was in doing right, it came very easy to do it.

"Ah! here comes your uncle Jacob now. See how good he looks! You can see his grey hairs and note the wrinkles upon his brow; but to me he is as young as ever, and I know that our love was never more fresh and fervent than it is now."

Just then Uncle Jacob came in; and when, an hour later, we saw him and Aunt Annie in the garden together picking flowers like two young lovers, we were forced to the conclusion that they were really and truly a happy couple; and Hannah Cleaves had no more disposition to defend Cousin Ruth against the charge of folly and wickedness in allowing her own ill-temper to make herself and her husband miserable.

S. C. J.



THE WRONG DRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Golden Maid," "The Stranger's Secret," "Man and His Idol," "The Warning Voice," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LOVE FOR LOVE.

Love is thine, oh, heart, and surely
Peace shall also be thine own,
For the heart that trusteth purely
Never long can pine alone.

Russell Lowell.

At the noise of the report of the pistol the horses took fright. They floundered from side to side, then dashed forward with the speed of the wind, dragging the carriage after them.

Every second it appeared inevitable that we should be turned over.

But my alarm even at that prospect was not so great as was my terror at Albany Seymour. Headless of the speed and the danger, heedless of Violet Maldon lying senseless at his feet, he tore open the carriage-door and sprang into the road.

It was the act of a madman.

Clutching the hand of the equally astounded Tadge, as he disappeared, we simultaneously rose to our feet, our faces white with horror. Nothing short of death, it seemed to us, could result from such a leap.

Nothing but death; but even while our eyes looked at this, the peril in which we were ourselves placed grew to a crisis. The swaying vehicle swayed yet more violently. Then came a sensation as of dashing up a hillside, a trampling, a crash, and the carriage had turned over, and I lay stunned in the road.

How long the effect of the blow remained—for I had fallen upon my head—I know no means of judging. But when I came to myself I was lying, bleeding and covered with dust; the carriage was at a little distance, and men, casual passers-by, were holding the horses with difficulty, the startled animals glaring with fiery eyes and champing the white foam with which their sides were flecked.

The sight of Violet, supported on a bank by the roadside, and bent over by the irrepressible Tadge—her own head bound round with a handkerchief—called me to a sense of what had happened.

Then my first thought was of Albany Seymour.

I looked back up the white, straight road, expecting to see him lying there, perhaps a corpse. But for that, for any trace of him, I looked in vain. There was no trace of him or of any other human being beyond the few stragglers who were gathered about us.

[JASPER NEWTON'S REVENGE.]

What had happened then? I asked myself the question with a strange misgiving at heart? Had Albany Seymour encountered the enemy by whom he had been subjected to such peril? And if he had done so, what had been the result? That he had no mercy to expect at his hand I well knew, and knowing this, I thought with a shudder of what might have occurred.

Cohesively as I could, I addressed Tadge, asking what had happened. What was to be done?

The voice in which she replied came to me as from a far distance, the effect of the shock under which I still suffered.

"Thank goodness, the poor dear hasn't come to her self, and knows nothing of it," said Tadge.

While speaking, she was in the act of binding a piece of her own dress, torn ruthlessly out, round the wounded arm.

"Nothing of what?" I succeeded in asking.

"Why, of his going off nobody knows where; and whatever we are to do goodness knows—I don't!"

"Surely he is gone in pursuit of the attempted murderer?" I exclaimed.

"Des'say, and if he should meet that awful ghost of a man and him, won't there be violence and murder, and oh, my good gracious!"

While listening, I still looked back up the road. It was bordered with trees and underwood of dense growth, with here and there, an opening worn with long use.

Plenty of concealment was thus afforded to anyone firing a shot; plenty of opportunity for escape there was also, of which the concealed assassin had doubtlessly availed himself.

Who that was, there could be little question.

Banditti do not infest the quiet heart of England, and the desperate shot could only have been fired by someone prompted by the deadliest malice or the most reckless hatred.

And as I gazed into the distance, there seemed to rise before my eyes again, the image of the fond, proud, gray-haired mother whom I had seen kneeling to her idolized son, entreating him to banish from his heart the demon that never yet was exorcised from the human breast—the demon Hate!

Even while this image was before my mind, I perceived in the extreme distance a rising cloud of dust, and very soon the sound of horses' hoofs were audible.

My heart leapt up at the sight, though I had no distinct idea of any advantage to result from it. Some instinctive prompting convinced me that it was a friend, and I stood watching eagerly till the horse-

man—for it was a solitary rider dashing towards us at great speed—came within range of vision.

When he did, when I was enabled to recognize the features growing upon my sight, I could not suppress a cry of delight.

It was no other than Oliver upon whom I gazed!

Half-incredulous, I stood for an instant irresolute; then, to the astonishment of Tadge, I rushed forward, and met him by the roadside.

Greatly astonished he reined in, and looked aghast at the figure I presented, blood-stained, and covered with dust.

"Julia! In this plight!" he ejaculated, and while he spoke he slid from the saddle and was by my side. "There has been an accident?"

"Are you not here because of it?" I asked in surprise.

"No," he replied, "I am here wholly in search of you!"—My heart bounded at his dear words—"I heard that, on leaving the house, you had quitted the neighbourhood in a carriage, coming in this direction, and I flew in pursuit of you. But tell me—the carriage has broken down?"

"Yes."

"And you have received some injury?"

In as few words as possible, I explained to him the position of affairs, and Violet Maldon's condition. Thereupon he hastened to where the carriage lay, and with a promptitude and energy that I could not enough admire, lent his aid in repairing the evil done.

Before long, the carriage was righted, the horses soothed and restored to the shafts, and the driver had received from Oliver instruction to stop at a roadside inn, a mile farther on, where rooms could be secured for Violet, while an active search was made in respect of Albany Seymour.

Oliver himself rode beside the carriage on the side I occupied, and all peril being for the moment over, I naturally reverted to the circumstances which had brought him there.

"Oliver!" I said, speaking from my heart, "to see you again gives me more happiness than anything could do; but is this wise? Was this step judicious? Better to have let me go my own way, and to have accepted the position fate had thrown in yours. Better, oh, much better!"

But a flush of indignation crimsoned his handsome face, and his eyes flashed proudly upon me.

"No!" he burst out, "that was impossible. It was a false step which took me to Gorewood Place; it is a true one—I am sure, a true one—that I take in leaving it!"

"But you will not leave it?" I exclaimed.

"What! Not when by remaining there I drive you forth—you, whose natural home it is—to seek your fortunes as you best may? Julia! You cannot think thus meanly, thus contemptibly of me? When I consented to play the part into which I have been entrapped, it was on representations artfully made, and almost impossible to resist. You know the subtle Italian, Jacintha; you know of what she is capable. To you, therefore, it will occasion little surprise that she should have won me by her subtlety to play a part which secured me affluence instead of poverty, a splendid home instead of the pitiless streets. Not that I did not struggle against the wrong. I did so. My life has been too unhappy from the wrong that has tainted it for me not to loathe the idea of deceit and dissimulation. But in her hands I was powerless; in her subtlety she seized the one weak point, the mystery which surrounded my early life, and, by hint and insinuation, succeeded in persuading me that I had a right to act as she suggested. That if she dared she could give me grounds for this step which would silence all doubt and hesitation. Need I say that this was mere invention, the greatest and most palpable?"

"You think so?" I asked, in an earnest tone.

He looked at me sharply.

"What else dare I think?" he demanded.

Instead of answering, I seized the hand that rested on the carriage window in both of mine, and looked eagerly into his face.

"But what if this should be the truth, Oliver?" I demanded.

The flush died out of his face, and he grew white and trembled a little; then he recovered his self-possession.

"Even were it so," he said, "I would not avail myself of my just rights, least of all through a stratagem."

"But why not?"

He hesitated, and looked down.

"You will confide in me?"

"No—I—do you ask it?"

"I will not betray your confidence," I said, instead of replying.

But he still hesitated. I saw the colour come and go in his face, and the hand I relinquished was trembling nervously.

"It is not that I fear any betrayal," he said, at length, "but because the explanation you ask of me comprises an avowal which must pain you as much in hearing as it does me in making. Shall I go on?"

With downcast eyes and burning cheeks, I felt the point at which he was approaching, and could not answer. My confusion encouraged him. Yet it was in a mournful voice that he continued:

"There was a time when if I had said to you 'I love you,' you would have imprinted your answer on my cheek, and your innocent happiness would have been no farther troubled by the avowal. But we were children then, and to love was as natural as to breathe. I cannot tell you how strong the brotherly feeling was that throbbed in my heart as we wandered hand in hand along this very road, nursing our dream of a life upon the sea. Doubtless it was the result of an instinct by which nature asserted herself. And I came to understand this when in after-years I reflected upon the past and knew that it was to one of your sex that I had unconsciously yielded my affections. From the time of that discovery I have never ceased to love you. With all the ardour of my passionate nature, with all the intensity of which I am capable, I have set your image before my heart, and yielded up my life to the adoration of it. But this is wrong. This is cruel. I am uttering words I have no right to utter. I am paining you with a confession that I should have carried with me in silence to my grave."

He turned aside.

Tears were in his eyes, as they had been in his voice. I saw that he was moved beyond the power of self-control, and his apparent anguish gave me inexpressible delight.

Yes: the woman who first listens to the avowal of another's passion does experience a satisfaction beyond all words in the pain endured for her sake—for her sake!—and in the torturing emotions which have forced an avowal from the victim of them. That emotion, those tears, transported me with a sense of rapturous enjoyment.

He loved me—he returned the silent passion of my heart!

Oh, bliss beyond all words! Oh, rapture, infinite and inexpressible!

Hungering for more and yet more of the delicious words that gave me this assurance, I feared to interrupt even his emotion. I feared to answer.

I was silent.

But I did not relinquish the hand I grasped in my burning fingers. This reassured him.

"You do not reply," he said, "and you cannot. I have not misunderstood the struggle in your breast,

and I do not misinterpret your silence. What could you say to me? To me—knowing who and what I am? Though the passion of my heart were reflected in yours, how could you own it, how could you say to me, 'You are the son of a burglar—you are yourself a convicted thief, and I deem you worthy of my love?' Impossible! The dark shadow of my birth and of my misfortunes must overshadow my days, must shut me out from love, from sympathy, from the life of honesty and fair fame which is more to me than all else. It is my destiny—I know it, and I must submit." Still I did not release his hand.

"Oliver!" I whispered, "you have surprised the secret of my heart. I love you. You are dearer to me than anything in life."

"No, no," he whispered, "you must not, you dare not."

"You are my fate," I cried out. "My happiness is in your hands!"

"Merciful Heaven!" he ejaculated, "that I should hear these words in agony of heart. Recall them, Julia! Let me believe that you are indifferent to me. Let me pursue my own dark course without the misery of dragging you down to my level. See how even in my last act I am your enemy! I clung into the belief that I serve the interests of others, and deluded with a fiction of the mystery that surrounds me, I come here to play a diabolical part, and it is you whom I wrong, when I drive forth from your home and from the care of those who love you. Twice have I done you this wrong."

"And twice my heart has forgiven you, freely, and without stint. Oh, Oliver! you do not know my unhappy position. You are ignorant of the barrier that separated me from home and love. Take all. Embrace the opening before you. Be wealthy, be prosperous, be happy: it is enough for me that you love me, and that I know it from your own lips!"

So I strove to soothe and calm his agitated mind; but my words only roused the waves I sought to still.

Releasing himself from me, he burst into a wild, impetuous outcry:

"Impossible!" he exclaimed; "I have gone wrong. I have taken the false road that leads neither to peace nor happiness. I have sacrificed my honour and manliness to falsehood, and I am justly punished. It is the retribution of heaven that I should come here to rob the being for whom I would lay down my life! It is cruel, but it is just. Oh, Julia! let me be gone—let me go while the echo of your words is in my heart. Let me tear myself from this place before I have done greater wrong!"

The paroxysm of the moment he would have left me, but the prospect of parting terrified me.

What if we should meet no more? What if blackness and desolation should settle down in a moment upon my life? I shuddered. I clutched at the arm next me, and it was with a choked and stifled voice that I entreated him to remain.

"Oliver!" I exclaimed, with passionate earnestness, "other interests than mine are involved in what you have undertaken. Disgrace, exposure, ruin, may fall upon those who are dear to me, should you abandon them thus abruptly. Stay, if but for a few days—continue to personate the part you have undertaken but a little longer, and I will accept the sacrifice as the strongest proof of your love—of your devotion to me!"

He faltered. I saw it in his pained look and restless eyes.

"Oh, if you but knew what agony all this crookedness, this falsehood, this deception is to me!" he burst out. "If you could only fathom the longing of my warped and blighted nature for what is pure, and good, and truthful, for what is upright, and reputable, and manly, you would not ask—"

Was it some look of disappointment in my face that caused him to hesitate? Was it fear of causing me one moment's pain?

I think so.

I know that he stopped abruptly, and that then, pressing the tips of my fingers to his lips, he murmured:

"Dearest, I can deny you nothing."

As he spoke, the carriage stopped. We had reached our destination. Too soon for love: too late for happiness.

Oliver had consented to the step I had proposed to him—and it was a false one.

CHAPTER XXXVII

WHAT HAD BEFALLEN ALBANY SEYMOUR.

What art thou fallen? What subtle hole is this, Whose mouth is cover'd with rude-growing briars, Upon whose leaves are drops of new-blown blood As fresh as morning's dew distill'd on flowers? A very fatal place it seems to me.

Titus Andronicus.

In all this time Albany Seymour had not reappeared!

Our course along the road was slow and toilsome with many stoppages, for the shattered vehicle moved along with difficulty, and the horses were hard to manage.

Yet he had not overtaken us.

I stood by the inn-door watching and anxious. Violet Mardon was conveyed to an upper room, where Tadge and a buxom woman, the landlady of the inn, applied restoratives; but I could not tear myself from the door. Was it because Oliver lingered the strangely reluctant to return to Gorewood, rest and uneasy, divided between his care for me and a fatal premonition he had given—fatal as far that frustrated the one longing of his life? I think I believe that in the mind of the strange being which had come upon me, a misgiving as to the fate Albany Seymour was in my mind, filling it gloom and anxiety, and that, as I stood beneath battered porch, in the growing twilight, my pinioness was merged in the dread of the unknown which might have overtaken the young fellow in sympathy with the persecuted object of his love.

The twilight deepened around me as I watched Oliver at my earnest entreaty, departed to Gorewood, having arranged a means of communication with me in case of need: but with an uneasy, a superstitious feeling upon me—with a presentiment of evil for which I could not account, and in the tenseness of which all other feelings were dawled still waited, still strained my eyes along the darkness.

In vain.

The stars came out, the night grew into purple splendour; a cold wind sprang up and chilled me to the bone; my hair and my garments were wet with heavy dew. It was midnight, and Albany Seymour had not come!

Violet, though very severely wounded, remained unconscious of the fact which weighed so heavily on my heart and tortured me so cruelly.

Having ascertained this, and knowing that she was in good hands, I at length consented to retire to a room provided for me, and there, overcome with fatigue, I threw myself on the couch, and was soon wrapped in a sleep of dreams, wild, strange, and improbable; but all bearing on Albany Seymour's fate.

But the reality exceeded in its romantic terror the creations of the night.

On springing from the carriage, Albany, alighting in safety under circumstances which in nine cases out of ten would have resulted in certain death, made his way, blindly and inconsiderately, back towards the spot from which the pistol-shot had been fired.

There, in the dust, he perceived marks of footsteps, and not far from the spot a break in the hedge, torn and ragged, as if from recent violence. Acting on instinct rather than reason, the impetuous youth dashed through this aperture into the underwood beyond, and, scratched and bleeding, emerged at length into a more open space, beyond which he could see water shining—the water which had risen in some great excavations in the sand and gravel, extending over many acres, which had been long abandoned, and now formed an artificial lake of wide extent, and no considerable depth.

Looking eagerly before him, Albany saw the light gleaming on the water, saw it playing on the intervening foliage, and saw no farther.

Another step in advance, and a blow aimed by an unseen hand felled him to the earth.

Darkness and insensibility followed. Death itself could hardly have blotted out the material world more thoroughly. But this was not death: it was but insensibility to pain; and it was pain—one of heaven's blessings in disguise—that restored the young hero to a sense of existence.

For hours, as it appeared to him, some sharp pang recalled him at intervals to a half-consciousness of life. What it was he knew not; his intelligence could not master that problem, but in a vague, dim, ghastly way, he realized the impression that the agony he was suffering was on the increase, and that it was an agency that was bringing him back to life.

He was not mistaken. Suddenly, a cry of anguish broke from his lips, and he was alive, and conscious of life.

Doubtless that consciousness had come by slow degrees, but it did not impress him in that way. It was as if he had opened his eyes out of deep sleep, and looked round and found himself—where?

He could not tell.

There were darkness and an earthy smell, and the trickling of water, and some restraint was upon him, from which he could not break away.

Ha! What was this?—He was bound hand and foot!

Yes, he could feel the ligatures cutting his arms, cutting his legs, compassing his chest as with bands of iron. His arms were pinioned to his sides, and his legs bandaged together; but the pain of the arms was

twenty times as acute as that of the lower limbs. Why? Because, as another moment showed, he was up to the waist in water, and that while it numbed and chilled the lower extremities, drove the blood into the upper part of the body, until the arms, tightly contracted, were nigh to bursting.

Where was he then?

A little space—a little while for the opening eyes to grow accustomed to the light—and he glanced upwards, and to an extent realized his situation. It was at the bottom of a cave,—a mere hole going down into the earth,—that he lay propped against the slimy rock that formed its side. Far up above it opened widely, and there the bright stars of night were shining through tangled briars, and the rude vegetation of the cavern's mouth.

What a situation!

Alone.

Bound to laceration, hand and foot.

Already half-submerged in the water, every moment augmented by the trickling drops from the cavern's side, left, by diabolical cunning, to perish, inch by inch, under the cold glare of the pitiless stars.

No wonder that the heart of the brave youth died within him, and that the cold dew of death clotted his brow as he looked his fate in the face.

"Heaven help me!" he muttered, in an agony; "I am beyond all other aid."

A wild, bitter, exultant laugh came like the echo of his words.

Then the voice of a fiend rang through the cavern. "Worse," it cried, in a mocking tone, "beyond heaven's aid also."

"No, blasphemer, no!" ejaculated the dying youth, "Its power is infinite."

A taunting chuckle was the only answer.

"I know you," cried Albany; "I recognize in you my deadliest foe—"

"True—your deadliest foe."

"And I lie here at your mercy; yet I do not despair. I will not yield up my faith in heaven. I will do so but my life."

"Your life!"

Infinite contempt imparted a demoniacal tone to those words.

They were spoken immediately above the head of the dying man, and, gazing upwards, he saw, outlined against the starry heavens, the tall, gaunt, wasted figure of a man, gigantic in breadth and proportions so viewed, and with something terribly grotesque in dress and attitude.

Beyond all question, this was the wreck—the pitiable wreck—which the indulgence of unbridled passion had left of the manly Jasper Newton.

Standing on the edge of the cavity—too near for safety—it was easy to see that his face expressed fiendish gloating over his fallen and perishing rival.

"Hear me!" he exclaimed, at length, folding his arms and assuming the sternest attitude. "You believed me dead. Until these few weeks you indulged the hope that I lay dead—dead by your hand."

"I did believe it," replied Albany, fearlessly.

"You might well," cried the other, in a tone growing momentarily more and more excited. "You saw me fall before your bullet. Your aim was good—it was at my heart that you aimed—and your shot did not misfire. And yet I live!"

"The bullet did not pierce your heart then?"

"To all appearance—yes. In reality—no."

"Yet I saw it enter your left side—"

"Where the scar yet remains. Ha! ha! Albany Seymour, you see fate had not doomed me to perish by your hand. There are mysteries in life, and I am one of them. Nature works by line and rule; for the thousandth, twenty thousandth, millionth time she repeats herself, and then—"

"What then?"

"She outages her own rule."

"You rave," cried the dying man, contemptuously. "Do I?" demanded the other, with a significant jeer.

Then, with arms still folded, he took a dozen paces to the right and so slowly back.

"Do I?" he repeated. "Do all the learned of Europe rave also? So, their science is a delusion, and their museums a cheat? Have you never heard, of men in whom the conditions of anatomy were reversed? Are you ignorant of the existence of the famous Prussian—an officer of distinction and noted duellist, who kept till his death the secret that a blow aimed at his left side was aimed in vain, since in his case it was upon the right that the heart, the centre of vitality, had its place? You remember this; but you have forgotten that nature repeats herself even in her eccentricities. When you saw me fall under your bullet you believed me dead. You fancied you had pierced my heart. You were deceived: the wound was deep, not mortal—*I live to revenge myself on him who gave it.*"

Again the tall form paced slowly to and fro, outlined against the starry heavens.

And the agonized and half-drowning man looked up, questioning with himself whether this were not a morbid creation of his sleep, and whether the relation to which he seemed to have listened were not wholly a delusion?

If not, where not these the words of a maniac?

There was little time to question.

Stopping abruptly, the gaunt victim of love and hate—deadly passions in which the heart is consumed as in a furnace—once more addressed his victim.

"Revenge! Yes, I have won it at last," he muttered, savagely. "Night and day I have dogged your footsteps. Heedless of all else, I have crossed and recrossed the sea, hunting you down as man was never hunted yet. And you thought to escape! You believed it possible to elude the vigilance of a man who hates! Miserable fool—know that my hatred has triumphed over my love, and that the woman you have stolen from me is indifferent to my heart, since she has degraded herself by contact with the object of my disgust. You do not believe me? You doubt the power that could erase her image from my doting heart. But you!—how should you know what it is to hate?"

A groan rising from the cavern was the only answer. The sound of it caught the quick ear of the speaker.

"What! You suffer?" he sneered.

There was no reply.

"The cords bite, do they?"

Still silence.

"And the water rises, as it would rise over a caged rat. Good—good!"

He rubbed his hands and chuckled, tramping to and fro in an ecstasy. Then, as if fearing to lose the slighted particle of triumph while the victim yet lived, he burst out once more:

"So, we had returned to England, had we?" he cried, in sarcastic tones. "We had slain our rival, the mere pettyfogger—put a bullet through his heart, ha! ha!—his heart, and left him? Or, if he dragged out his miserable days in some foreign hole—what matter? We had come home to love and fortune: to enjoy the prize of the heart we had stolen, and secure the wealth for the sake of which we were content to give up even our profession. A splendid programme—well devised and well carried out! But fate is stronger than villainy! We thought only of ourselves. We forgot the Avenger at our heels tracking us, step by step—step by step—till the hour came when, by heaven's help, he would put a bullet through both our hearts and level us with the dust. That was not to be. It was not in the decrees of heaven. The Avenger was foiled for a moment—only a moment—that he might exact a heavier penalty, and enjoy the luxury of inflicting more protracted tortures, the prelude to a more ignominious death."

Struggle as he would, the unhappy being in whose ears these vindictive words rang in the silent night, could not repress a moan of pain, so sharply did the ligatures cut; so terrible was the idea of the slowly rising and bubbling water.

"What! You suffer? You do suffer?" demanded the exulting foe.

"If I do," demanded Albany, bravely, "what are my tortures to yours?"

"To mine?"

"If I am doomed to die, I have the consolation that my murderer will bear with him through life the tortures of hopeless love and pitiless remorse. The slave of your hideous passions, your fate is like that of the slave thrown living to devouring beasts: they will not only torture—they will devour you."

"But I shall at least have wrung a cry of agony from your lips," persisted the infatuated man.

"The coward's boast!" cried Albany. "The brave fight—the coward tortures."

"Fine words! Fine, tricky words!" sneered the other; "but I am not to be balked in my hour of vengeance by scraps of stage plays and stale moralities. You suffer—you will die. Thank God!—oh, thank God!"

He threw up his arms in a paroxysm of excitement, and the figure black against the stars was that of a maniac in his hour of exultation.

Presently he stopped.

There was a strange gurgling sound.

"Ha! It has reached your lips!" he shouted. "So soon! That robs me of an hour of ecstasy. No matter; the water rises, and will rise. It is your doom. Do you hear? Your doom."

There was no response.

"Listen!" shouted the excited rival. "Your case is hopeless. Nothing can save you. The water oozing from the limestone finds one natural outlet—one gully which carries it into the mill-pond. It is a mere rat-hole the mouth of that gully—the only outlet—remember that! The only outlet, and I have stopped that with a stone plug—from within! You

hear? From within!—so the water weighs upon the plug, and every drop sends it the firmer into its place. There is no leakage—no escape! You have no chance but to drown! No chance—none, none!"

There was a groan.

Then came a sound as of choking—a strange gurgling, spluttering sound, to which the gaunt watcher listened as to divinest music.

"How now?" he shrieked. "What are your chances now? Ha! gasp, struggle and gasp—it is in vain! Death is at your lips! Groat and moan—the music to my ears—but it avails you not. Now then, who wins? But stay—stay! One word while you have the power to hear it. One word to take with you as my benediction. I go to make *Violet mine*. She has dared to affect a love for you, and her fitting punishment is to become the wife of your murderer. Violet a murderer's wife! Think of it now—now as you die. Let the words ring in your closing ears—Violet your murderer's wife!"

He ceased and listened.

The sound of the gurgling and the choking was over.

There was no moan: not the faintest movement. Nothing but the drip, drip of water distinctly audible in the still night.

Jasper Newton listened kneeling for a long, long space, then, springing up, he burst into a loud hysterical laugh. The next moment he had thrown himself upon the turf and was sobbing, as a child sobs, as if his heart would break.

(To be continued.)

LESSONS FOR THE HORSE-GUARDS.

Look what Prussia has done with eighteen millions of people. Look at the system, the economy, the foresight. Our fighting apparatus, either by sea or land, is not to be compared for one moment in point of organization with hers. Hers was a State with two-thirds of its available force actually engaged in the avocations of peace. Suddenly the drum beats and the bugle sounds, and scores of thousands quit their peaceful toils—and lo! there is a magnificent army. Why is that? Because there is a framework in which to put this host taken from the plough, the desk, the factory, and the forest. Not only a framework in which to put them; there was a skilled staff, carefully trained and selected to command them. There were ample means provided to feed them in quarters and the bivouac, an excellent machinery for keeping them supplied with ammunition, a very efficient corps to pick up stragglers by the way, and bear the wounded from the battle-field.

Our dashing and sharp-sighted young officers with the Prussian army will, no doubt, bring home most useful reports of all they have seen. The interior of the Horse-Guards ought to be wrinkled all over a month or two hence. The authorities will know exactly how all these things are managed by our German cousins. But when they know, they will probably sigh over the superiority of Prussian organization to our own, fold up and pocket the excellent reports, and put them in pigeon-holes, there to lie till the next war, or the day of judgment. Better fate ought to befall them. But we know too much of the *modus agendi* in this best of all possible countries to believe it.

PRINCE EDWARD of Saxe-Weimer, the Duke of Richmond, and several other noblemen and gentlemen, who were on their way north for grouse shooting, had a narrow escape. The train in which they were seated was stopped by two platelayers, who had just discovered that a tributary of the Finedhorn had washed through the railway. Upon examining the line, it was found that it had been washed away for a distance of more than twenty yards, and that the water was flowing nine feet deep. We hope the platelayers will have a bit of plate larger than a five-shilling piece presented to them. What say the noblemen saved to the value of their lives being estimated in tissue-paper marked fifty in the corner? We hope we do not over-estimate their lives.

THE CARRIAGE AND DEPOSIT OF DANGEROUS GOODS.—The Act of Parliament lately passed has been printed to amend the law with respect to the carriage and deposit of dangerous goods. Nitro-glycerine is declared to be specially dangerous, and other goods by an Order in Council may be deemed dangerous, and such goods are to be marked and a notice given of their character, and any person who commits a breach is to be liable to a penalty of £500, or two years' imprisonment, where the party knew the nature of the goods. Such goods are to be forfeited. No warehouse owner or carrier to be bound to receive or carry any goods which are specially dangerous; and the term "carrier" is to include persons or bodies carrying goods or passengers by land or water.

EXTRAORDINARY VOYAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.—A short time since, a fully rigged vessel, of two tons burthen, named the Red, White, and Blue (master and commandant, J. M. Hudson, of New York), entered Margate harbour, having completed a most daring and extraordinary voyage from America in thirty-eight days. Her crew consisted of two men, who were accompanied by a dog. She is built on the lifeboat principle (of iron), has air-tight compartments, and is only twenty-six feet long—about the length of a small sailing boat. She experienced a rough voyage, and the crew have determined, on their return journey, not to risk their lives by attempting so daring and extraordinary an adventure. They had several narrow escapes from being washed overboard.

TEMPTATION.

By J. F. SMITH.

Author of "The Will and the Way," "Woman and her Master," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXVI.

He has as many wiles as a serpent—
Tricks as a monkey. Passion cannot stir,
Or pity move him. I mistrust that man.

Creon.

The following day, Sir Walter Trevanian received a letter from Mr. Foster, informing him of the discovery of his brother's will, and requesting his presence at the reading of it in his chambers in the Temple.

"Outwitted, after all!" observed Marshall, to whom he handed the communication; "that rascal Duncan was too sharp for us! Have you any idea where the fellow is? His silence might be purchased!"

"It is of little consequence," answered the baronet, coolly, "and not worth the money it would cost. Doubtless the fellow has his price, but I am not inclined to pay it; besides, he hates me!"

"Where is he?"
Peapod purchased his discharge, and has taken him, I believe, into his service!"

"Upon your honour, Trevanian," said his confidant, "you bear up bravely! I must congratulate you on your philosophy! To be sure you have the advantage of the colonel! You retain your title—he has lost his! Peapod is remorseless in his revenge—addressing his uncle, as if by mistake, as 'my lord'! I shall never forget the scene at the Clarendon! Surely that triumph might have satisfied him! What do you intend to do?"

"Nothing!"
"Nothing?" repeated Marshall, with surprise; "and this will—"

"Is absolutely so much waste paper—and the extraordinary part of the affair is, that my father must have known it!"

"Your father was a shrewd man!" drily observed his companion.

"My dear fellow," continued Walter Trevanian, "there are secrets in all families! Enough to say that, had I been in possession of facts which have since come to my knowledge, and which I am in a condition to prove, I should never have troubled myself about Edward's will!"

"But you will attend and hear it read?"

"Certainly!"

"Perhaps he was mad!" added Marshall.
"As same as you: there is no disputing it on that score! Repress your curiosity for a short time—for positively it is not my intention to gratify it! My father, with all his cleverness, judged erroneously when he gave the living of Farnsfield, worth heaven knows how much a year, to obtain possession of one will, and fifteen hundred pounds for the second. I would not have parted with as many pence to have secured all three!"

"You are shrewd, Walter—devilish shrewd!" said his friend; "but take care, or you will find yourself outwitted at last!"

The baronet smiled complacently, as if in pity at the prediction of the speaker; and, fully satisfied of his own superior judgment, appeared perfectly assured of the result.

It was agreed that Marshall should accompany him on the appointed day to the chambers of the lawyer.

Great was the surprise of General Maitland when informed by Mr. Foster of the long-concealed marriage of his son, and the existence of a grand-daughter. Although neither a very enthusiastic nor impressionable person, he was a man of honour, and resolved at once upon acknowledging her. As for her remaining under the roof of Martha Mendez, he would not hear of such an arrangement for a single day.

The decision was not an unnatural one, however calculated it might prove to wound the feelings both of Fanny and her protectress.

"No—no!" he said. "The child of my murdered

boy must break all ties with the descendant of Peter Quin! She may be a very estimable person, as you say! I shall at once remove her to the house of my sister, Lady Peters!"

"You forget, general," observed Mr. Foster, "that Fanny has another grandfather, whose claim upon her duty and obedience equals your own!"

"I presume you allude," replied the old soldier, haughtily, "to the father of the young person whom my son was imprudent enough to marry!"

"And who, by profession as well as birth, is a gentleman?" said the lawyer, not over-pleased at the peremptory tone of the speaker; "he has served in the army!"

"Glad to hear it! His name?"

"Moore!"

"His rank?"

"Lieutenant and adjutant!"

"My old subaltern!" exclaimed the general; "a very worthy man, and as you say, a gentleman—made an impudent marriage with a girl without a shilling! Still he is a gentleman—and poor George's choice was not as very reprehensible, after all! We shall speedily understand each other! Were my poor boy living, I should forgive him—for birth with me is a great consideration!"

Mr. Foster noticed the extreme complacency with which the old soldier dwelt on the fact of his—the blind old adjutant—being a gentleman, and his avowed prejudice in favour of birth; and the idea struck him that he had been devoting his energies to insure the misery, perhaps, instead of the happiness, of Clement.

"Perhaps," he said, "I had better see Miss Maitland first, and prepare her for your visit!"

The old gentleman reflected for an instant: he had an important engagement at the Horse Guards which it would be inconvenient to put off, and the delay would give him time to see his sister. As his feelings were too well regulated to be very deeply interested, he at once assented.

"You are right!" he said. "Tell her I will call this evening and inform her of the arrangement with her aunt, Lady Peters!"

After making a memorandum of the hour at which the will was to be read, the general took his leave, and the lawyer started for the residence of Miss Mendez, who regarded him with almost childish helplessness when he announced to her the visit of Fanny's grandfather.

"I shall not leave you!" said our heroine, in a decided tone. "General Maitland is not the only relative who possesses a claim on my obedience!"

"He may apply to the Chancellor," observed Martha, "whose authority we cannot dispute!"

"Of course not, but it is very easily evaded!"

Both the ladies eagerly demanded by what means.

"By placing Fanny at once under the guardianship of the adjutant, whose claim is equally near as the general's!"

The lawyer was a man of great resources, and money in London can work wonders.

In less than three hours a ready-furnished house within a few doors of Harley Street was taken, and the adjutant, with his daughter and her husband, were duly installed there.

When the general made his promised visit, he was informed by the footman that Miss Maitland had removed to the residence of her grandfather.

On his calling there, neither Therese nor her father would hear of Fanny's quitting them; and as there was nothing which the most fastidious person could object to in the arrangement, the old soldier was compelled to submit.

His recognition of his grand-daughter was cold and stately. Poor Fanny felt her heart sink within her as she mentally contrasted his manner with the warm affection of the relatives on her mother's side.

"I must always reverence and respect General Maitland!" she observed, after he had taken his leave; "but I feel that I can never love him as I do my poor blind grandfather!"

Sir Walter Trevanian and his friend Marshall arrived at the chambers in the Temple at the appointed time. Both were surprised at the presence of the general, who, at the request of the lawyer, had consented to be present.

After narrating the circumstances of the will—its loss and recovery—Mr. Foster proceeded to read it.

By it the testator bequeathed the Trevanian estates, on the death of his father, to his dear and valued friend George Maitland—to him and to his heirs. There was a provision for his faithful servant Duncan, in the shape of an annuity for his life, and a charge upon the property to the amount of twenty thousand pounds, to be divided between his half-brother and sister.

To the astonishment of all present, the baronet listened to the reading of the testament—which to all appearance begged him—with the most profound indifference; more than once a satirical smile curled the corners of his lips.

"Nothing more than I expected!" he observed, at last, but without the least appearance of anger or disappointment; "Edward always hated me!"

"Perhaps," said the lawyer, "the feeling was mutual?"

"Although your assumption is most gratuitous," replied the young man, haughtily, "it is not without truth! I detested him!"

The general looked shocked—not at the sentiment so much as the bad taste of the avowal.

"May I ask if Sir Walter Trevanian has any objection to offer to the validity of his brother's will?" inquired Mr. Foster.

"That is a question for his lawyer to decide!" said Marshall.

"Pooh!" interrupted his friend; "it is hardly worth while to dispute it! Pity," he added, "that George Maitland died without an heir!"

"There you are mistaken, sir!" exclaimed the general. "My son, unknown to his family, had contracted marriage with the daughter of a former officer in my regiment, from which union a daughter was born shortly after his assassination!"

Even this discovery did not affect the unanimity of the baronet; but when he heard who that daughter had proved to be, he suddenly became deeply interested.

He had not forgotten the fair girl of the Château Vert: her preference of our hero had galled him, and he would have given worlds, had he possessed them, to snatch the prize from the man he so bitterly hated.

"I must refer you, gentlemen," he said, "to my legal advisers! As a point of duty to the name I bear, as well as to myself, I shall defend my rights by every means in my power."

"Perfectly fair!" observed the grandfather of the heiress.

"Only too happy that my conduct merits the approbation of so honourable a man as General Maitland!" replied Sir Walter, with an air of great respect, at the same time rising to take his leave.

"Cool, but gentlemanly!" muttered the old soldier, as the baronet and his companion left the chambers.

"Can't make him out!" said the lawyer; "he appears more confident and less excited than I expected! If he relies on proving the insanity of Edward Trevanian, he will be disappointed!"

"You think he was sane, then?"

"As you or I, general!" replied Mr. Foster; "he was a young man of singular acquirements, feelings, and temper—but in the perfect possession of his reason!"

The general returned home, deeply pondering on the scene which had taken place. Since he had discovered that his grand-daughter was the heiress of the Trevanian property, she had become a very important personage in his estimation, and he began to meditate the most brilliant prospects for her.

During the day he received a visit from Sir Walter, who came, as he said, to propose an arrangement which would prevent all litigation on the subject of the will: it was neither more nor less than the offer of his hand for Fanny.

The general at once accepted it.

"You are right!" he said; "quite right; it will prevent all litigation! The name of Trevanian is as honourable as well as an ancient one—came in at the Conquest with the Maitlands! Nothing can be better!"

"And yet I am halfafraid," observed his visitor, "that your grand-daughter may prefer that of Foster!"

"Impossible, sir!" interrupted the general, colouring to the temples with anger at such a supposition; "without my consent, she would never presume to encourage the addresses of any man—and least of all, the son of a mere lawyer!"

When the baronet took his leave he had quitted the old man perfectly alive to the danger of a malice, and thoroughly determined to take the necessary steps to prevent it.

That very hour he drove to the residence of Fanny, after congratulating her on the brilliant inheritance she had succeeded—or rather was about to succeed—to, he concluded by coolly informing her that he had received an offer for her hand, and had accepted it.

"Without consulting me!" exclaimed the astonished girl, with the most artless naïveté.

The gentleman replied, "in the sphere in which she was henceforth to move such a proceeding was unusual."

"But I have another grandfather!" urged Fanny.

"True—your mother's father—the adjutant!" remarked the general, not without a certain degree of bitterness that the opinion of any other person should be weighed for an instant against his.

"Who is dear to me—quite as dear to me, sir, as you are!" continued our heroine. "Nay, do not be angry at my truthfulness! I have not yet learned the

lesson of deceit! Besides," she added, with a modest blush, "my heart has long been given to another!"

"You must recall it!"

"Never! It is not in my power!"

"Fanny," said the general, in a severe tone, "I have heard of the attempt which has been made by the son of the old lawyer in the Temple to entrap you into an engagement; but he forgot one thing in his calculation—that you were my grand-daughter, and that the law of my country, as well as that of nature, gives me a voice in your disposal! My consent is necessary—and that is already promised to Sir Walter Trevanian!"

"To him!" repeated Fanny, in a tone of calmness which very much surprised her new-found relative; "you must recall it, then—for I had rather toil or depend on the world's cold charity for bread than share the wealth of princes with that man! My word, grandfather, as well as my affections, are pledged to Captain Foster! I shall keep it!"

CHAPTER LXVII.

For thou urg'st justice,
Be assured thou shalt have justice more than
Thou desir'st. *Shakespeare.*

It would be difficult to say whether anger or astonishment predominated in the breast of General Maitland at the firm refusal of his newly discovered grandchild to listen to the addresses of Sir Walter Trevanian. It was in vain that he pointed out to her the advantages of the match—how it would settle amicably all disputes relative to the property, and place her at once in a brilliant position in society. Fanny only replied to him by a quiet smile, or "You forget, grandfather, that I am engaged to Clement Foster!"

The old soldier could not comprehend such firmness—obstinacy, he called it. His ideas of hearts were similar to the ones he entertained of recruits—namely, that they were things to be drilled—to be regulated by superior orders—and to fall in or out of love at the word of command.

That Fanny must eventually yield to his advice, and become the wife of the baronet, he was firmly convinced—and expressed himself to that effect when Clement Foster, after repeatedly calling upon him, at last contrived to obtain an interview.

"You perceive," he said, after explaining his views to our hero, "that the match, Mr. Foster, is perfectly out of the question! Personally, of course, I can have no objection to you—so you must not feel offended; for although your family is not very old, I believe it is perfectly respectable, and De Vere tells me that you honourably distinguished yourself in the Peninsula!"

His visitor bowed at the compliment.

"I hate lawyers," continued the general; "that is," he added, perceiving that the countenance of Clement flushed with anger, "professionals! This marriage—which, I assure you, you may look upon as a settled thing—will spare a vast deal of litigation—give Fanny a position in society which her unfortunate appearance on the stage might render it otherwise difficult for her to attain!"

"But Miss Maitland has refused him?"

"Oh, yes—yes—we understand all about that! Refused him as young ladies generally refuse a title and a husband, the first time they are offered to their acceptance—only to give their friends an opportunity of persuading them to what they secretly desire!"

"And is such really your opinion of your granddaughter, General Maitland?" demanded our hero.

"It is!"

"Then it is not mine! I feel assured that when Fanny has once given her affections, no solicitations will induce her to recall them! They are mine, sir—so truly and devotedly, that, were I in my grave, Walter Trevanian would stand as little chance of becoming her husband as he does now!"

"You think so!" observed the general, with a smile of pity at what he considered the vanity of the speaker.

"I am sure so! He is her aversion! She despises him!"

"Bah! A ridiculous girlish dislike, which will wear off with time—especially when they are married!"

"If I thought there was the slightest chance," exclaimed Clement, "of such an event, I would take effectual means to prevent it!"

"May I ask those means?" demanded the old gentleman, drily.

His visitor remained silent. Angry and excited as he was, he had still sufficient presence of mind not to commit himself by a declaration of any hostile intentions against his rival. General Maitland was a cool, calculating man of the world, apt and determined, and not likely to forego the advantage which such an avowal would place in his hands.

"Pardon me!" said Clement; "but only novices show their cards to their opponents!"

"That depends upon the game they intend to play!" drily observed the grandfather of Fanny. "Come, Mr. Foster, I will be more frank with you than you appear inclined to be with me. It suits my views that Fanny should become the wife of Sir Walter Trevanian! As I said before, it will prevent all litigation respecting the property! She is under age, and I am her natural guardian!"

"You forget, sir, she has other relatives!"

"But none so near as I am," continued the old soldier; "and I shall at once take proceedings to make her a ward in Chancery! As for the adjutant and the persons who are related to her on the mother's side, of course there can be no objection to her seeing them occasionally; but her residence must be with my sister, Lady Peters, who is perfectly willing to receive her! Good morning, Captain Foster!"

"Good morning, General Maitland!" replied his disappointed visitor; "I will not plead that the happiness of your grandchild is at stake! You are above such common-place considerations!"

"Perfectly so!" answered the general, with the most provoking composure.

"When I waited upon you to ask your consent," continued Clement, "I was quite hopeless of obtaining it!"

"You judged very rightly, sir!"

"Still I did so in deference to Fanny's wish and the near tie between you! As I anticipated, I have failed to move you!"

"Utterly!" ejaculated the general.

"I must now rely upon myself!" added the lover; "on the affection and natural good sense of your granddaughter! She will never be *Lady Trevanian*!"

So saying, the young soldier left the house, and hastened with impatient steps to the residence of the adjutant.

Fanny and Therese were seated in the drawing-room of their new home when Clement Foster made his appearance after his visit to the general.

The aunt had been recounting to her niece the sad story of her mother's love and untimely death, glancing as lightly as possible over his own generous devotion and sufferings, from scrupulously adhering to the promise made to her dying sister.

Our heroine fully appreciated the delicacy of her newly discovered relative, and already began to love her.

"Weeping!" said our hero, taking her gently by the hand and kissing away her tears. "Oh, Fanny, could the wishes of my heart be realized, sorrow should never approach you—life should appear one golden holiday—a glorious summer's dream!"

"You have seen my grandfather?"

"Yes."

"And met with a refusal?"

"He is cold and selfish," replied her lover. "I might as well have prayed to an idol as appealed to his feelings! He has none, save those of pride and ambition! He is determined to make you the wife of Walter Trevanian!"

The fair girl looked upon his countenance with a modest blush, and gently smiled. No vows, no protestations could have conveyed to him the same blissful assurance as that confiding look. Had the least doubt, or even the shadow of one, lingered in his heart, it must have dissipated it at once and for ever.

"The wife of Walter Trevanian!" repeated Therese, warmly; "of that bold, bad man you were speaking of! Oh, never—never! Of course," she added, addressing Clement, "you told him that Fanny's heart was engaged—that she loved you dearer than any earthly being—that it was the earnest desire both of her grandfather and myself that you—and you alone—should become her husband?"

"Believe me," said the lover, "that I left no theme untouched to bend his resolution—but found it iron! He spoke of his authority, and treated the claims of her mother's family with indifference, if not contempt!"

"I am sorry for it!" quietly observed Fanny. Her lover looked at her uneasily for an instant, but not doubtfully.

"I would willingly," she added, in a more decided tone, "make any sacrifice short of happiness and self-respect to have obtained his affection; but——"

"You hesitate!" observed the young soldier, impatiently.

"But not my love!" she continued, in that deep, earnest tone which falls upon the ear when the heart feels the words the lips pronounce; "my early sufferings and trials have taught me firmness and decision! Clement," she added, with touching confidence, "do not think my speech unmaidenly! But claim me when you will, my lips shall ratify the vows which make me yours!"

The lover in an instant was at her feet, pouring

forth incoherent expressions of gratitude and devotion.

Therese, remembering the days of her own trials and courtship, like a kind, considerate aunt, rose from her seat and silently left the room.

When the adjutant and Miss Mendez were informed of the conduct of General Maitland, they highly approved of our heroine's resolution. The latter, fearful lest her project of a marriage between her adopted child and Clement should be prevented, urged an immediate union. She trembled lest, by being placed under her paternal grandfather's guardianship, he should separate them.

That same evening the lawyer and Dr. Bennet were consulted on the subject.

"Do nothing hastily!" said Mr. Foster. "Wait the result of the trial!"

"You forget, my dear sir," interrupted his son, "that Fanny is a minor?"

"I seldom forget any legal point!" drily answered his father.

"But should the general refuse to authorize proceedings?"

"The executors of Edward Trevanian's will—of which I am one—and the adjutant can proceed without him! I stake my legal reputation on the result. General Maitland," he added, "will have neither the power nor inclination to interfere to prevent your happiness!"

It was a rare circumstance for Mr. Foster to express so decided an opinion.

His long experience in the turnings and subtleties of the law made him chary, and Clement felt that he must have very strong grounds indeed for arriving at so positive a conclusion.

He was obliged to express himself satisfied, although, as our readers doubtless suspect, he would much rather have ended his fears of losing Fanny by an immediate marriage.

The fact was, the old gentleman had held several long and private interviews with Dr. Bennet and Bet Guyton, who had put him in possession of certain facts which threw a new light upon the will of Edward Trevanian.

He now perfectly agreed with the baronet that it was so much waste paper—perfectly invalid as far as any rights the testator ever possessed to the Trevanian property.

But we must not anticipate events.

When our hero heard him express this opinion, far from feeling disappointed, it was a source of real happiness to him. His love appeared the more disinterested.

"Fanny—dear Fanny!" he exclaimed, "should my father's surmise prove true—and I can scarcely doubt it—I cannot tell you how inexpressibly happy it will make me! I never desired this wealth—it gave you no additional charm in my eyes; on the contrary, it pained me, by rendering the distance between us still greater! I am not rich, but possess enough for content, which needs but little! Say, will you not at once resign this fatal fortune?"

"Willingly!" replied the fair girl; "the only value it ever possessed in my mind was the thought that it might render me more worthy of you!"

"Very heroic! very romantic, indeed!" exclaimed the lawyer, with a good-humoured smile; "but, unfortunately for Sir Walter Trevanian, you have no power to make the sacrifice without the consent of your guardians—which I venture to predict you will never obtain!"

The lovers regarded each other with a look of disappointment.

"I can appreciate your delicacy," continued the old man; "but were the object of it as worthy of it as, on the contrary, he has proved himself unworthy, it could not be! You have neither the moral nor the legal right to reject this inheritance—or rather the portion of it," he added, "which falls to your share!"

"Certainly not!" said Dr. Bennet.

"But if the will is worthless?" timidly observed Therese, to whose simple, straightforward mind the opinions she had just heard appeared a paradox.

"And it is worthless!" exclaimed both the gentlemen.

"But who is to prove it?"

"The baronet himself, who alone possesses the means!" replied Mr. Foster; "and now question me no more! Wait patiently for the trial, which, if I err not, will be one of the most singular as well as interesting which has been heard in the courts since the celebrated Kingston case!"

"I really cannot comprehend it!" observed Clement, not regarding his father's request that no further questions should be asked.

"And yet you had once a very pretty notion—considering your age—or law!" answered the old gentleman, with a sigh; "but campaigning and love, I suppose, have driven them out of your head!"

"You say that Walter Trevanian can upset the will?"

"Easily!"

"Then why contest it?"

The question appeared to be so very natural that everyone present listened anxiously for the reply.

"We wish him to do so!" said the lawyer.

"Would it not be more generous," timidly suggested Fanny, "at once to resign all claim—which, however grateful I may feel for the testator's friendship to my poor father, I can scarcely consider a just one!"

"Reasoned like yourself!" exclaimed Dr. Bennet, with a look of admiration. "The gifts of fortune, I perceive, will never corrupt your heart; they can only add to your virtues by affording you a more extended sphere for exercising them!"

Taking both her hands in his, he added:

"Be satisfied with the prudence as well as the honourable intentions of those who, however enigmatical their conduct may now appear, have only your welfare and the ends of integrity in view! You cannot doubt the oldest friend of your poor mother or the parent of Clement Foster!"

After such an appeal it was impossible to pursue the subject farther.

Martha had heard all that passed with secret satisfaction. It was a consolation to the affectionate woman that her young favourites should owe their future wealth to her, and not to Edward Trevanian.

"My father and Dr. Bennet," observed our hero to Fanny, "doubtless wish to be legally and honourably disburdened of the duties they have undertaken: their scruples are those of delicate minds, and we must submit!"

Between our readers and ourselves, there was far more disappointment than resignation in the tone in which the words were uttered.

The great cause of Trevanian *versus* Maitland was consequently allowed to proceed.

(To be continued.)

THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

The band, the girt across the earth
Now holds in one community
Two nations near akin by birth
Though far divided by the sea.
How many care have lain it there;
While many doubts have cast aside
The task, which borne with a good cheer,
At length has baffled wind and tide.
Beneath the crests of mighty waves,
Along the sand or pebbly soil,
Midst loaming beds and silent graves,
Swiftly flies the fire at toil.
And now we greet the western part
With freedom—friendship as our guide;
And with a willing, peaceful heart,
We hail for progress side by side.
For surely, near by blood allied,
By kindred dear to one another,
By friendship long together tried,
Calling each by the name of brother,
These long-related earth-born ties
Must deeper root and stronger bind,
Cemented by this spark, that flies
With words of love and peace we send.
And as from hand to hand, thro' seas,
Electric flies the wondrous news,
May truth and justice—liberty—
Ever through its cells be well diffused.
And may that stern, rough voice of war
Which devastates with angry gnash,
Be banish'd e'er its walls afar,
Nor e'er impede its peaceful flash.

GEO. C. SWAIN.

VIVIAN TRAVERS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The notable scheme which had been so fully concocted between mother and son had been as fully overheard by Vivian, to whom it had given, if possible, a new impetus to her plans of escape.

As soon as they had descended the stairs, she arose, brought out the knife she had secreted, and set to work at the lock she had chosen for her operations, endeavouring to loosen the screws.

She remembered to have seen at some time a blacksmith unscrew an unsatisfactory lock, and she endeavoured to imitate his movements as well as she could with the clumsy instrument at her command.

It was a difficult task, but success at length crowned her efforts!

She could open the door at her will!

Trembling with joyful excitement, she would have ventured out into the hall at that moment, when she heard returning footsteps.

She hastened to replace the lock, so that to a casual observer it might appear as usual, and then seated

herself in an agony of fear, lest Mrs. Hawkers should choose to try the door or enter in that way, instead of through her own chamber.

Her fears were groundless, for the ex-actress and her son passed on to the room of the former, and Vivian crept to the door in time to hear her express her satisfaction at the preparations they had made.

"The girl couldn't have overheard us, could she?" asked Roffey.

"Dear, no. Besides, she's asleep by this time. It's ten o'clock now, and people who do nothing, sleep early."

"Shall you go in to see her to-night?"

"No, I might awaken her. I do not want her to suspect our absence, though if she did, no harm would be done. There are three hours between this and one o'clock, and we might spend it in seeing if we can improve on our plan."

For at least an hour Vivian crouched by the door, listening to the repeated details of the robbery, the gloating over prospective spoils, the description of the home to which they would retire with their ill-gained wealth; but at last, to her great joy, their restless spirits suggested an adjournment to the back parlour below, lest they should disturb her slumbers by the sound of their voices.

Taking the lights with them, they departed; but Vivian remained for sometime perfectly still, to assure herself that they were not listening at the door.

Becoming certain that they were not, she at length arose, noiselessly removing her walking-boots, putting them in her pocket, and stole across the floor.

All was silent in the hall and on the stairs.

She carefully pinned up the rustling train of her gorgeous robe that it might not betray her, wrapped around her her long waterproof cloak, which fell in dark folds to her feet, completely concealing the snowy muslin skirts, that had lost their crispness, and drew over her head the hood, almost shrouding her features.

She was ready to start.

Yet not quite ready, for before turning towards the door she knelt and offered up an earnest supplication to be guided in safety from those perilous precincts.

She arose from her knees, encouraged and strengthened, stole towards the door, opened it as silently as possible, although it seemed to her that it croaked fearfully, and then crept out into the dark and silent hall.

It seemed to her that there were eyes gleaming at her through the darkness, and hands outstretched to detain her; but dismissing these morbid fancies, she gained the staircase, descended it, and found herself in the lower hall.

Here she paused, hearing the low sound of voices issuing from the back parlour; but her hesitation was but momentary.

Moving forwards, she felt her way to the front door, but, to her dismay, her hands came in contact with bars and chains, which she found impossible to move without great exertion and noise.

What should she do?

She asked herself the question again and again, the words forming themselves in her mind without meaning; but suddenly a thought came to her.

The cottage must be in the midst of a garden, for she had approached the porch through a garden path. There must also be a back door; and as the inmates lived so secluded, it was probable that they came and went mostly through the rear entrance.

How it was to be reached she did not even imagine, but she determined to make an effort to find it.

Stealing along the hall in her dark garments, like a black spectre, she passed the door opening into the room where the conspirators were busy, her heart throbbed at the time violently, and she feared it would be heard by them.

At the extreme end of the hall she found a door, which yielded to her touch.

On opening it, the fresh wind blew in her face, and she almost cried for joy at feeling it.

Descending a low step, she found herself in the open air, and drew the door noiselessly after her.

The descent to the garden-walk was easy, and it was not difficult, even in the extreme darkness, to be guided by the cottage walls to make the circuit to the front gate.

Reaching it, she glided through, and found herself completely free!

How her soul exulted within her!

The wild wind that tossed her skirts and dishevelled her hair was not more wild than was her soul at that moment.

Her first impulse was to hasten homewards, but the recollection that no one was there excepting Lorimer caused her to stay her steps.

A timely remembrance of the "old miser," whose life and wealth were threatened by Mrs. Hawkers and her son, came over her, deciding her first to warn him of his peril before doing anything more to secure her own safety.

Putting on her shoes, she hurried along the street, scarcely knowing whither she went, in her anxiety to leave the Hawkers's cottage behind her, turning one or two corners, and finally running against a boy.

"I beg your pardon," she said, as he paused to regard her. "Can you tell me where an old miser lives?"

"This is his place you're passing," was the response. "If you're going to beg of him, you'll find it 'no go,' for his dog is an awful one. But there's the gate."

Vivian thanked him so earnestly that he expressed a hope that the miser would give her all the assistance she needed, although he feared to the contrary.

The maiden waited until he had passed on, then entered the gate and hurried up to the porch, where she searched vainly for a bell.

She found the knocker, but fearing that would make too much noise, she tried the door.

It was unlocked.

She hurried into the house, along a bare, unlighted hall, that justified the reputation of its owner, towards a back room, through the key-hole of which strayed a single faint beam of light.

Opening this door without ceremony, she found herself in the poorest room conceivable, which was occupied by an old man and his dog, who were, as the reader has suspected, Hugh Aynscourt and his transmigrated friend, Sir William Hamilton.

Both looked up with surprise at her entrance, and the philosopher opened his mouth to address to her a grave remonstrance upon the baseness of bearding him in his den, while Sir William lifted his head with a growl, which died away as his saurian eyes noted her youth and remarkable beauty.

These were fully displayed, for she pushed back her sombre hood, and advanced to the master of the dwelling, demanding:

"Are you the miser, sir?"

"Miser," repeated the philosopher. "Ah, I remind me, that is the name bestowed upon me by the gay pleasure-seekers of this degenerate age. If to hear up the diamonds of thought, the pure, unalloyed gold of wisdom, to be play the miser, then have you named me rightly."

Vivian was not a little surprised at this response; nor was her surprise lessened when the old man arose and she marked the keenness of his eyes, the noble and dignified expression of his features, and the breadth of his ample forehead.

"I am sure you are not a miser, sir," she said, frankly, "although your room seems to confirm the popular report."

The philosopher smiled pityingly, and explained that he was a second Diogenes, desiring only a tub to live in—which, by the way, was about all he had—that he found pleasure in denying himself useless indulgences, and that he had been for many years engaged in the experiment of trying to ascertain upon how small an amount, and how poor a quality of food would sustain life.

He added that he despised the so-called luxuries in which men usually engrossed themselves, and that he cultivated his soul by repressing his body.

Having thus explained his peculiar tenets, he demanded what she wanted, who she was, and why she didn't go home, giving effect to his questions by stating that he did not like women, and that the race of Hypatias and Aspasia had completely died out, and that a beehived, bejewelled, and benighted species had taken their place.

As soon as Vivian found a chance to speak, she said:

"I came here, sir, to warn you of designs upon your life and property to-night."

"Well," said the philosopher, coolly, "if a robber can find anything in this house that is as good as he has, he is at liberty to remove it."

"But, sir," said Vivian, earnestly, laying her hand upon his arm, "at one o'clock to-night two persons have planned to enter your house, kill your dog, and—"

"This is serious," interrupted Mr. Aynscourt; "but don't say 'dog'—say friend. Allow me to introduce my friend, Sir William Hamilton, to you, miss."

"Sir William Hamilton!" cried the maiden. "Are you Mr. Hugh Aynscourt? Can it be possible that I have saved Philip's uncle, of whose eccentricities I have heard? What a providence!"

"Philip's uncle! Yes, I am the uncle of a young profligate named Philip, who prefers a woman to philosophy and my wealth. Do you know him?"

Vivian assented, adding:

"Secure your house, sir, and I will tell you who and what I am. Let us hasten. It is long past eleven."

She caught up the candle, and Mr. Aynscourt could do no less than follow her into the hall, bar and lock the door at her gentle command, and thoroughly secure all the windows, after which they returned to the back room.

"Are these windows secure?" asked the maiden.

"One is not, but I will leave it as it is, as Sir William and I will teach these bold burglars a lesson. Tell me who is coming."

Vivian replied by relating the plot she had overheard, the philosopher watching her animated features with considerable interest, and Sir William fondling her with his nose.

When she had finished, Mr. Aynscourt asked :

"How did you recognize me by my friend's name? Is it generally known that Sir William Hamilton's soul inhabits an humble animal form, and that he is my daily companion and friend?"

"I heard it from Philip," replied Vivian, with a blush. "I am the 'woman' upon whose account you call him a reprobate. I am Vivian Trevor."

"You!" cried the philosopher, in astonishment. "Then how came you in that den of robbers?"

Vivian replied by informing him of all the strange events of the past few days, dwelling most upon the joyful discovery that Mrs. Hawkers was not her mother, that her parent was dead, and that consequently she belonged to her dear adopted parents.

In the excitement of her narration, her cloak dropped from her bare andainty shoulders, revealing her snowy bosom, encircled with a string of pearls, and the corsage of pink silvery brocade adorned with costly lace.

Ignoring this unintentional display of what he most contended, although he could not help noticing it, the philosopher exclaimed, when she had finished :

"I hardly wonder that Philip clung to you, Vivian, if you are so good and true at heart as you are beautiful externally. You would make a splendid Hypatia, and you need not—no, you need not—give up these folderols if you like them. I am not sure but upon you they would advance the claims of philosophy upon the multitude. We will talk of that to-morrow. You will stay here to-night?"

"I suppose I had best do so."

The philosopher seemed pleased, then inquired, hesitatingly :

"Do you sleep upon a bed or a bench, Vivian?"

"Upon a bed, sir," and an amused smile gathered around the maiden's mouth. "But do not let me interrupt your domestic arrangements, or interfere with them, as it is not likely I shall sleep much to-night. Let things go on here as they always do, uncle."

The title slipped unawares from her lips, and she blushingly apologized; but Mr. Aynscourt, with considerable haste, considering his hatred of women, joined her to call him "uncle," or he should be seriously displeased with her.

Evidently the grace and beauty of his nephew's betrothed had found a warm corner in his crusty old heart, and he was indulging in glorious visions of making a Hypatia of her.

"Philosophy acknowledges beauty when like yours, Vivian," he said, ignoring the respectful "Miss" as something unnecessary, and as involving a waste of time in the utterance. "But to return to the subject in hand; be pleased to retire to my bedchamber and extinguish the light. Sir William and I will await our burglarious friends."

Vivian took the light and went into the room indicated by the philosopher, almost laughing as its ascetic character attracted her notice.

Putting the candle on the settle, she extinguished the light and was about to return to the other room, when Hugh Aynscourt approached the door, whispering :

"Hush! keep still, and don't be frightened! It's one o'clock, and I just heard them trying the front door. I think they are coming around the house. Yes, there they come! They'll try the right window in a moment."

Taking his walking-staff from its corner, the philosopher crossed the floor, stationing himself with Sir William beside the window that had been prepared for the burglars, ready to give them a warm reception.

CHAPTER XXV.

VIVIAN, crouched in the doorway between the two rooms, with palpitating heart and hushed breath, heard distinctly stealthy footsteps creeping along without, and equally stealthy trying of windows. But those windows, which had not been opened for years, refused to yield to the touch of the burglars, and they seemed desirous of exploring every window and door thoroughly before resorting to the use of the tools they had provided.

The maiden heard them finally approach the unfastened window in the philosopher's study—if by that name his usual sitting-room might be called—and glancing towards it, she beheld Hugh Aynscourt standing rigidly erect, his staff uplifted in his hand, and his dog beside him crouched for a spring.

Even in that moment she could not avoid noticing the seemingly human intelligence guiding the actions of Sir William, and regarding him admiringly as the most sagacious dog she had ever seen.

It need hardly be stated that her sympathies were

all with the lonely old man, whose life and property were sought by unprincipled wretches, and to these latter she gave not a single thought.

She had but one fear, and that was, that the abstemious old philosopher would find his arm too weak to repel the intruders, and that the knife of Roffey would be brought into deadly requisition.

She scarcely thought of what would be her own fate if discovered there by Mrs. Hawkers and her son.

The unfastened window was reached, was tried gently, yielding to the force applied to it.

Then came the sound of subdued whispering outside. When that had died away, the window was softly pushed upwards, and Vivian beheld the outline of the head and shoulders of a man.

Another period of whispering, and the man raised himself to the required height and pushed himself into the room, looking cautiously around him.

Neither the philosopher nor Sir William moved, and scarcely seemed to breathe, keeping back in the dense shadow of the wall.

The intruder silently crossed the room, his feet evidently muffled in hose of list or flannel, opening the door into the hall, where he paused, listening intently.

He then returned to the window.

"All right, mother," he whispered to his anxious confederate outside. "Give me your hand. The old fellow is downstairs counting his gold. I heard it click!"

He stretched out his hand to Mrs. Hawkers, assisting her to enter the room through the window.

She was half-way in, her body poised upon the window-sill, when the philosopher touched his canine friend significantly.

They sprang to their work together.

With scarcely a promonitory movement, Hugh Aynscourt brought his heavy staff down upon the head and shoulders of Roffey, who cried aloud in his sudden terror.

At the same moment, Sir William, with a low growl, fastened his teeth in the shoulders of Mrs. Hawkers, and the woman's shrill cry of alarm only caused him to tighten his hold in savage delight, shaking her as a terrier shakes a rat.

The blow the philosopher had given Roffey was followed by another and another, during the repetition of which the burglar sought blindly for his knife, which he had placed in his belt, ready for use.

At the moment when he would have withdrawn it, the staff descended upon his arm with such force as to disable it, forcing him to relinquish his purpose and bowl with agony.

He then endeavoured to rush upon his assailant, but the philosopher danced around him in a bewildering manner, that would have fascinated a Dervish, continuing to belabour him without mercy.

"You heard the 'old fellow' down the cellar counting his gold, did you?" exclaimed Mr. Aynscourt, increasing the intensity of his blows. "Take that—and that—and let it be a warning to you to quit this way of getting a living."

The "that—and that" referred to were a couple of blows into which the fiery old philosopher threw all his strength, and which fell upon Roffey's person with crushing emphasis.

The burglar, in a panic of terror, made a blind rush for the window, nearly upsetting Sir William, who was still playfully shaking his speechless captive.

The philosopher called off the dog, and Roffey sprang through, pushing his master with him, both falling to the ground.

They sprang up almost instantaneously, darting around the house.

"See them to the gate, Hamilton," cried the excited recluse.

The dog needed no second bidding, but sprang through the window with the quickness of a flash.

Then followed the sound of hurrying footsteps, gasping moans, and low growls, as the discomfited burglars fled to the front gate, the dog at their heels.

They hastened into the street, and Sir William listened a few moments to their departing footsteps, and then he returned to his master, by whom he was welcomed with extravagant praise and congratulations, he seeming to comprehend them all.

The window was closed and fastened securely, the shutters replaced, the candle lighted, and then Vivian arose and approached Mr. Aynscourt, exclaiming :

"How pale you are! You are very tired; but how bravely you expelled them! I would not have imagined you so strong!"

"Your praise is partly due to Sir William," responded the philosopher, with a pleased look. "He dealt with the woman, if woman she was, for she had

on a man's cap and coat. They won't be robbing misers for some time to come, I'm thinking."

He seated himself, wiped his damp brows, and chuckled over the discomfiture of the burglars.

"But you are looking pale too," he said, after Vivian had fully expressed her joy at the result of the encounter. "You ought to retire. I will take a little rest in my chair. Take your light, if you want it, and go into the bed-room."

Vivian felt too excited to sleep, but she noticed that the philosopher was greatly fatigued, and she did not demur to his proposal.

Arising, she started to go to the bed-room, but returned, clasped her arms around the neck of the old ascetic, and kissed him, saying :

"You defended me too, uncle, and I thank you for it. Papa and mamma will do it much more ably."

"They couldn't" interrupted the philosopher, her innocent kiss thrilling his soul like the strain of forgotten music, or the voice of one loved and lost in early years. "And if they could, it wouldn't be as pleasant, by any means, as this—this expression of your gratitude."

There were tears—actual tears—in the philosopher's eyes as they followed her to her room door, and dwelt meditatively upon the blank wall formed by the door, after she had closed it.

"How holy, and pure, and sweet she is," he thought. "She makes me think of the stars, as I used to see them, or the hills at evening-tide, or the flowers in the open fields—sountainted by the world."

He slept little that night. Perhaps the pain in his arm had more to do with his wakefulness than the tender thoughts flooding his soul. At any rate, he would have made himself think so.

It was nearly dawn when he lay down beside Sir William, sharing the ragged blanket with his dog, and his slumbers were short and fitful.

When he awoke he found a spirit of unusual order reigning over the room.

The floor looked as though it might have been swept, and the books were neatly put away upon their shelves.

All but one, and that was in the hand of a pink-robed fairy, who made her appearance from the bedroom as he assumed an upright position.

"Good morning, uncle," she said, brightly, her face beaming with the sunshine of joy. "Are you quite well?"

The philosopher replied in the affirmative, though a twinge in his arm reproved him for the involuntary falsehood.

"Then, while you attend to your toilet, uncle, I will get breakfast. Where is your pantry? And the fire—why there is none!"

"Fire is a useless luxury," began the recluse; proceeding no farther, however, as he observed that the shoulders and arms he had so much admired the previous evening were being covered with her long cloak. "You sit down, and I will get breakfast."

He withdrew to another apartment, deluged his head and hands with cold water, combed out his hair and beard, and returned to his guest.

His breakfast was in primitive style.

He fished, by means of an old iron fork, from the tin basin a bit of cold meat and a piece of bread, both of which he gravely offered the maiden, to be taken with her fingers. With an amused look, she took them.

Sir William was then waited upon, and Mr. Aynscourt attended lastly to his own wants.

"Do you have a perpetual picnic like this, uncle?" asked Vivian.

"Pionic!" exclaimed Mr. Aynscourt, the forgotten sports of his youth recurring to his mind, wondering that his guest should take such pleasant views of what were to him the grave and unavoidable demands of his "miserable body."

"Does it seem so to you? I suppose," he added, frankly, "it does seem to you hard fare for every day. I am not sure that luxuries would not be allowable to you."

"Then I shall soon have them—and you will try them too, uncle. You will accompany me home directly, will you not?"

"I feel it wouldn't be safe for you to go, Vivian. Those wretches may be on the look-out to kidnap you, or again entrap you, since your parents are gone. You had better send me over first to inquire when they are expected home. I can bring that Lorimer home with me."

Vivian assented to this proposition, and hurried Mr. Aynscourt off as soon as he had finished his repast, promising that she would keep herself carefully secluded during his absence.

Sir William was left to guard her, and many injunctions did that intelligent animal receive from his master not once to lose sight of his friend's honoured guest.

After the philosopher's departure, Vivian found the back room dark and lonely, and set out, with her pro-



[THE BURGLARY.]

tector, to make an exploration of the house, in order to while away the heavy hours.

She visited the lofty, deserted drawing-room, the bed-chamber adjoining, the kitchen and laundry, all bare of furniture and covered thick with dust.

Then she went upstairs, along narrow passages, visiting unfurnished chambers and boudoirs, exploring closets and nooks without number.

"I wonder if he ever had any furniture," she mused, mounting to the great old-fashioned attic. "Ah! here it all is, thrown in here."

And there it was, covered with dust and mould, the once fashionable furniture of the mansion, in the greatest confusion and disorder.

"It's good for nothing," commented Vivian, after a close examination of it. "The chairs would break down under my weight. Those massive tables might do, but the rats have quite devoured the hair-cloth sofas. How I should like," she added, "to cure Mr. Aynscourt of his eccentricities, and make him a good uncle to Philip. I am sure I could make him happy."

She busied herself in thinking, until Sir William's frantic scratching upon the low window induced her to look out, and she beheld Mr. Aynscourt coming slowly up the walk.

She looked in vain for Lorimer at his side, and hastened wonderingly downstairs to admit him.

"The woman told you rightly, Vivian," said the philosopher, as he entered the hall, securing the door behind him. "Your parents and Philip are gone, and won't be back under a week."

"But Cousin Percy Lorimer?"

"He has taken Dennis, your old servant, and gone to Brighton, to be absent till to-morrow. The servant did not know why he had gone, but I conjecture that he has gone in search of you."

Vivian was greatly disappointed, and her host consoled:

"So, if you go back home you will be almost totally unprotected. Those pretended relatives of yours may claim you, and there would be a scandal that would ring from one end of the city to the other. You had better place yourself under my protection until your parents return."

"Perhaps I had better," said the maiden, thoughtfully. "I can write to Cousin Percy to-morrow, to let him know that I am quite safe, and he can then telegraph to papa, mamma, and Philip. And I think I should be safer here than at home, since they are all away."

Influenced also by the thought of avoiding any possible scene with Mrs. Hawkers and her son, who

might seek her at her own home, Vivian promised to remain with Mr. Aynscourt until her parents' return.

Another idea also influenced her, but that she did not mention.

Why might she not employ the week before her by endeavouring to change the habits and opinions of Philip's uncle, making him happy, and awakening in him a desire to make others happy?

It looked to her like a holy duty, and she resolved to undertake it.

Returning to the sitting-room with her host, she insisted on putting away his hat, staff, and cloak, and then said :

"And now, uncle, as your housekeeper, I ought to settle what we shall have for dinner. What would you like?"

The philosopher replied by peering into the now empty basin, and then looking somewhat confused, answered that he would send Sir William after food, as usual.

"But I want something warm," said Vivian. "I am fearfully hungry, uncle. I ate nothing to speak of during my imprisonment, and my present happiness brings me an extraordinary appetite. And these walls are so damp, and I feel so cold that a warm dinner is a necessity."

"The walls damp!" exclaimed the philosopher, with an air of surprise. "That's a new thing, then, for I never noticed it. But I'll send a note to the restaurant-keeper to send hot roast beef instead of cold."

"And, uncle," said Vivian, her eyes sparkling with suppressed mischief, "I can't think of depriving you of your bed again to-night. Besides, it wasn't comfortable. If I stay here I ought to have a bed. I make so much disturbance in your quiet household you will want to send me away, won't you?"

"No, indeed!" was the energetic response. "If you are wedded to these luxuries, Vivian, I have money enough to buy them. I have hopes, however, of making a philosopher of you before your friends return, and you can convert Philip. How much money will you want to fit up a room to suit you while you stay?"

"How much can you spare?"

The philosopher replied by pulling out from behind his back an old broken tin box, full of papers, &c. From among these documents he culled half-a-dozen bank-notes, each representing the sum of five pounds.

"Will those do?" he asked.

"Splendidly," was the response, and Vivian took them eagerly, a charming plan forming in her brain.

"Shall I go out and buy these things for you?"

"No, uncle. I can write to the tradespeople, and they will come here. All I ask of you is to post the letters."

The philosopher was satisfied with this arrangement, and the maiden found writing-materials, with which she proceeded to indite several missives, sealing and addressing them to tradespeople who were well known to her by reputation.

No stamps were to be found in the house, but Mr. Aynscourt promised to supply the deficiency at the post-office, and went out to post the letters.

At noon Sir William was sent with a written order to the restaurant, returning with hot beef and potatoes in his basket, instead of the cold fragments, and the philosopher divided them as he had done the breakfast.

After dinner the host declared himself completely exhausted, and his looks confirming his words, Vivian persuaded him to retire to his "bed-room," and wooden settle, and she folded his coat under his head for a pillow.

She amused herself, and gratified him, by reading Plato to him for a full hour; but a loud knock sounding on the front door, she stole away, shutting him in, and went to answer the summons, accompanied by Sir William.

The visitor proved to be a tradesman, whom she had urgently summoned, and the first of a dozen who came within the hour.

The philosopher, lying upon his rough board, and tossing with pain, thought his bed had never seemed so uncomfortable before, nor had the room ever seemed so disagreeable and desolate.

"How unpleasant it all seems here," he muttered, half-aloud. "This house is much worse than Diogenes' tub. The floor was so dirty she had to pin her dress up, and the rooms so cold she had to cover herself up with that of hers. I believe Hypatia did not disdain the charms of dress. Vivian would make a most attractive teacher of philosophy. I must take pains when I get up to convert her to my views. She's a noble woman, and I don't wonder that young dog of a nephew of mine clung to her. The point is to convert her, and he will follow in her steps. Dear me, how my arm aches!"

There came to him, as the hours wore on, the sound of busy voices, the dashing of water, the beating of hammers, and various other signs of confusion, mingled with the occasional excited bark of Sir William; but these sounds at length all fused into one, and he slept soundly.

(To be continued.)



[NATALIE AT HER HUSBAND'S BEDSIDE.

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XVII.

Take heed of pity : pity was the cause
Of my confusion ; pity hath undone
Thousands of gentle natures in our sex.
For pity is sword servant unto love ;
And this be sure, wherever it begin
To make the way, it lets the master in.

Daniel's "Arcadia."

THE morning subsequent to the duel in the fountain-glebe the Lady Ellen Haigh appeared pensive, and not all the raillery of her gay companions had power to bring back her wonted spirits. The cause of her pensiveness was unsuspected, save by one person, and that person was Miss Wycherly. But, whatever her suspicions, Miss Alethea bestowed unusual attention upon the young widow, who, with mingled surprise and pleasure, wondered that her haughty hostess should so unbend to her.

The Lady Ellen declined riding, when the horses were ordered, and lingered in the drawing-room while her friends retired to don their habits.

She was quite alone, when Richard Layne was announced.

He was pale, as might have been expected, but his cheeks flushed as he advanced and greeted the young widow, who blushed vividly and betrayed an unwanted embarrassment—as if her thoughts had not been all of him since their last meeting, and as if she had not declined her morning ride because she expected his coming !

She inquired after his health with evident solicitude, and, on being assured that his wound was of no importance, betrayed considerable relief, as if she had teared to the contrary.

"I hope it will not heal too rapidly, Lady Ellen," said Richard, lightly, "else I shall lose all claim upon your pity and sympathy. It is pleasant to have some one solicitous about one, and it is a pleasure I have seldom enjoyed, owing to my uninterrupted and unromantic healthfulness. I must make the most of my present paleness!"

Her ladyship laughed merrily, more at the look of the visitor than at his words, and her laughter banished all constraint between them.

After thanking her for her kindness of the previous evening, Richard inquired after Miss Wycherly, the Lady Leopolda, and their guests.

The Lady Ellen was replying to his courteous inquiries, when the sound of voices and footsteps in

the corridor announced the intended departure of the riders, and the young widow led the way to the balcony, from which place she intended to witness the mounting.

Richard followed her, and was recognized by the guests, as they came out, who urged him to accompany them, but he politely refused, his paleness being sufficient excuse.

He had already become a favourite with the visitors of the Castle, and they expressed their regret at his headache, even while they mounted their impatient steeds.

The riding party was not large, consisting of the Lady Leopolda and Basil Montmaur ; Miss Braithwaite and Lord Templecombe ; and Miss Emily Braithwaite, attended by Sir Wilton Werner.

As they waved their gay adieux to Lady Ellen and Richard Layne, and swept down the avenue, Richard remarked :

"I do not see the Marquis of Waldemere. He was formerly very fond of riding!"

"He returned half an hour since from a wild dash over the hills on that half-tamed horse of his," answered Lady Ellen. "He is probably in the library. He seems very fond of solitude, and is gloomier than ever to-day. You speak of his former tastes. Is your acquaintance with him of long standing?"

"We were friends years ago, before his lordship retired to his Welsh hermitage," said Richard, hesitatingly. "We have not met for ten years, or thereabouts, until now. He is older than I am, but notwithstanding the difference in our ages, we were like brothers once!"

"Then you must know him thoroughly, Mr. Layne," exclaimed the young widow. "What is this mystery that envelopes him? Why is he always so gloomy and moody, as if brooding over a terrible past?"

Richard's fair face was shadowed, and he replied, evasively :

"Your questions are difficult to answer, dear Lady Ellen. He is gloomy because he carries an unquiet heart and a soul at war with itself. He has seen much trouble!"

"But, Mr. Layne," said the Lady Ellen, in a half-whisper, "did he ever do anything wrong? He seems so like the Corsair, you know—"

Richard involuntarily smiled, but soon said, gravely ?

"However his lordship may have erred and gone astray, he has no stain of blood upon his hands. Years ago," he added, reflectively, "before he was outwardly what he now is, he had the noblest heart a man ever carried in his bosom. He was generous to a fault, gentle—but I forget myself. He is

changed—changed terribly—and to his inmost soul. I fear him now as much as I once loved him. Except in features, he is not the same man I delighted to call my friend and brother!"

"Are you still friends?"

"We are the bitterest of enemies!"

The Lady Ellen looked startled at these words and the tone in which they were uttered, and said :

"I would not have believed that you had an enemy in the world, Mr. Layne, or that you could hate any one! You must know the mystery that surrounds the marquis, and perhaps you are concerned in it!"

"You are right, Lady Ellen. I know all, or nearly all, and the darkness that envelopes his lordship sometimes presses heavily upon my own heart! The secret, however, is his, not mine to reveal. Your ladyship is greatly interested in the marquis," added Richard, with a smile.

The young widow accepted this partial change of subject, understanding that Mr. Layne did not wish to pursue the late theme farther.

The glimpse he had given her of an existing secret she carefully hid in her own soul, the conversation having, in her view, taken the nature of a confidence, which it would be sacrilegio to impart to another.

The interest with which she had regarded the Marquis of Waldemere was partially transferred to Richard, who began to appear a hero in her eyes. His bland, boyish face and his blue eyes assumed new dignity in her sight now that she had become aware that he was a sharer in the mystery enveloping his lordship, and that the two men were deadly enemies.

"My interest in the marquis was mostly curiosity, Mr. Layne," she said, frankly, after a thoughtful silence. "I have read so much of gloomy beings like his lordship, and he answers so exactly to descriptions I have read of romantic personages, that I was not alone in my estimate of him. But I think I will turn my curiosity in some other direction. I do not admire such dark men."

"Do you not?" exclaimed Layne, eagerly. "You prefer fair-haired ones?"

Lady Ellen assented with a smile and a blush, and Richard seemed to take new heart from the assurance.

It was evident that the two young people were greatly impressed with each other, and that already fires had been lighted upon the altar of either heart that might burn more and more steadily, until they should grow into enduring and perpetual flames.

Their conversation was desultory, and, although they found it full of interest, a listener might have thought differently.

Miss Wycherly eventually made her appearance,

and Richard greeted her so courteously that the Lady Ellen experienced a faint pang of jealousy, which was not unmarked by her hostess.

A pleasant, general conversation followed Miss Alethea's entrance, and the time flew by unnoticed, until at length the striking of the clock warned Mr. Layne that it was time for him to go, as he had an engagement to meet.

The hostess went with him to the door, as seemed to be her frequent custom, but soon returned to the Lady Ellen, who stood in the balcony.

"He is a good rider, Miss Wycherly," said the young widow, watching Richard, as he bowed and rode away.

"His horsemanship is the least of his good qualities, dear Lady Ellen," answered the hostess. "He is the kindest, the best-hearted of men! I know him better than others do," she added, curiously, "for we are as brother and sister. No sister could feel more affection for a brother than I do for Richard Layne, and he could not think more of me if we had been born of the same parents!"

The young widow looked after Layne with a brighter and more hopeful glance, her heart quite set at ease by the careless declaration of Miss Alethea.

Mrs. Braithwaite entered before more could be said, and claimed the fulfilment of a promise given her by Lady Ellen of a new song.

While the young widow proceeded to fulfil it, Miss Alethea glided from the apartment, going to her own room.

Alison Murray admitted her, and closed the door securely behind her.

Miss Wycherly addressed a few remarks to her attendant, and was then about to retire to the inner room, when young Arthur bounded into the antechamber.

"Oh, mamma!" he shouted, rushing up to her; "I have been waiting for you this good while. What made you stay so long?"

"Hush, my darling!" said Miss Wycherly, her proud face beaming with maternal tenderness, "some one might hear you. You should not rush into this room without knowing if I were alone. Suppose I had had some one with me?"

"Why, then I should have seen some one besides you, mamma," responded the boy, with a gleeful laugh. "Why don't you bring some one else in here? Why must I be kept shut up all the while?"

"I cannot explain my reason to you yet, my dear little son, but it is very necessary for you to remain unseen. Are you getting tired of mamma, Arthur?" and Miss Wycherly's tones were full of tender reproach.

"No, indeed! You know I'm not! I'd be willing to be shut up in a cave with you for a thousand years, mamma, instead of in these pretty rooms. I wouldn't be away from you and Alison for a million pounds. But I'd like to see Papa Richard too. I peeped out of the lattice and saw him riding away, as grand as a king. Didn't he leave any message for me?"

"Yes, my darling!"

Miss Wycherly paused, as a low, but peremptory knock sounded upon the door.

"Who can it be, Alison?" she whispered, with a startled air.

"I don't know, my lady. The Lady Leopold hasn't come back from her ride. It can't be one of the servants—"

The knock was repeated, still more peremptorily.

"It is the marquis, Alison!" exclaimed Alethea, growing deathly pale. "I cannot meet him with the boy. Come, Arthur—"

But young Arthur, seeing his mother's distress, would not leave the room with her. He clenched his tiny fists, assumed a resolute manner that was meant to be formidable, and exclaimed:

"Open the door, Alison. Whoever it is he shall find I can protect my mother! Let him in!"

The young widow's demonstrations were summarily ended, for Miss Wycherly caught him up in her arms, and abruptly retreated with him to the inner chamber, as the knocking became louder and continuous.

As soon as the door had closed behind her, her waiting-woman unlocked and threw open the door opening into the corridor.

As she expected, Lord Waldemere stood before her.

Without a word, he brushed past her and looked suspiciously about the room.

"What do you want, my lord?" inquired Alison, after glancing into the corridor and shutting the door.

His lordship took no notice of the inquiry, but crossed the floor towards the inner chamber.

"That is my lady's bed-chamber!" cried the woman, indignantly, and full of fears for the safety of her mistress and Arthur. "She will never forgive your lordship's intrusion; you have no right here. Go away!"

The command was enforced by personal efforts on

Alison's part, but their object paid no heed to her vigorous pullings, pursuing his course, and flinging open the door of communication between the two rooms.

The inner chamber was empty.

There was a faint fluttering of draperies, as though Miss Alethea's departure had been quite recent, but no means of escape could be discovered by her enemy.

"You see my lady is not here!" cried the waiting-woman, triumphantly. "Your lordship had better leave before she comes."

"I was sure I heard her voice in conversation with some one, and equally sure I heard a child's voice saying, 'Papa, Richard!'" said the marquis, gloomily. "And what is it to you if you did?" demanded Alison, boldly.

"Nothing—nothing!" and there was a wail in the marquis's fierce tones. "But I wanted to assure myself that Layne is here!"

"You'll have to wait some time to do that, my lord," responded Alison, with grim determination. "My lady don't admit gentlemen to her rooms, and the sooner you leave them the better! Mr. Layne was not home—minutes ago, as your lordship could have seen; and as your lordship can now find out by inquiring of the footmen or the grooms. Come! I can't have you here any longer!"

His lordship turned on his heel, meekly obeying the command, rather than have a scuffle, and heartily ashamed of his conduct.

Alison followed him to the door, ushered him into the corridor, after ascertaining that his egress would be unobserved by any passing servant, and then closed and double-locked the door after him.

"I desire his lordship's entrance did give me such a turn!" said the faithful creature, congratulating herself on the cleverness she had displayed. "My lady had just time to get away. I must go and tell her!"

Proceeding into the inner chamber, she carefully secured all the doors, as if the caution were habitual, and then advanced to the wall, as if about to contemplate the large paintings adorning it.

There were three of these paintings, and to the middle one Mrs. Murray directed her movements.

Touching a spring in the frame, the canvas sprang out of it, like a square door upon hinges, and a door in the wall was revealed. This door fitted so perfectly that its presence could not have been detected, save when, as now, it stood slightly ajar.

Beyond the door was a stone staircase in the wall, and the woman hastened to ascend, first shutting the picture-door.

The stairs were many, the Castle rooms being all lofty, and there were two flights with a small landing between.

Alison proceeded no farther up than this landing, but, turning aside, opened a door on her right, gaining admittance into a suite of rooms that were worthy of a fairy prince.

They were as large and lofty as those underneath, and, like them, consisted of two saloons, alcove for a bed, bath-room, and dressing-room, &c.

They were lighted during the day by finely latticed windows, looking upon lawn, wood, and garden, and by night by pendant lamps, whose mellow light filtered through glass globes. There were shutters and damask curtains to prevent a single beam of artificial light from straying without; and it was not therefore to be wondered at that the occupancy of those tower chambers was a secret to everyone.

The walls of one room were panelled with polished oak, so dark that it might have been ebony. The wainscoting of the other was concealed by draperies of warm-hued silk that fell in graceful folds from the ceiling to the floor.

The rooms were carpeted with the matchless productions of the clumsy Persian loom, and the pictures they presented rivalled the gems upon the walls. Here and there their surface was obscured by leopardskins, beautifully spotted, or by magnificent white furs, more spotless than when they encased the animals who gave them up with their lives.

The furniture was of the richest and most delicate description, and there was a profusion of fresh flowers in the vases, of new books upon the hanging-shelves and little tables, and of beautiful new toys everywhere, showing that the most assiduous care was constantly exercised that the boy-proprietor might not tire of his home.

In the inner chamber of the suite, in a low chair, was seated, at the moment of Alison's entrance, Miss Wycherly, with her boy still clasped tightly to her breast.

The look of alarm had not yet vanished from her face, and her voice trembled, as she looked up, saying:

"Well, Alison?"

"His lordship has gone, my lady!"

"I am glad of it! I cannot tell you what I suffered, Alison, as I listened to hear what he said. I made

my escape at the right moment. I do not see how he dared enter my rooms! Oh, if I had only a father or a brother! If the late earl were only alive! If I had only some one to whom I could appeal for protection!"

"There is the present earl, my lady. He could not refuse to defend his kinswoman—"

"Mr. Montmaur—"

"No—no. I must bear my own trials. You forget, as I did but now—that to obtain their protection, it would be necessary to state why I fear the marquis. That I can never do! If I were once tempted to do so, they would scorn and blame me—perhaps disown me! No, Alison, I must bury the trials I endure in my own breast. It will not be for ever!"

The beautiful boy in Miss Alethea's arms had not been inattentive to these remarks, and he now raised himself up, inquiring earnestly:

"What troubles you so, mamma? Can't Papa Richard take care of you from the bad man you fear so?"

"Yes, Arthur, I hope so. But if he cannot, you will soon be old enough to defend me;" and the young mother smiled fondly through her tears upon her son.

"Who is this bad man, mamma, who hates both you and me? Is he the one I saw at the cottage?"

"Yes, darling!"

"I didn't think he looked very bad," said Arthur, smiling—"at any rate, not like a poacher!"

Miss Wycherly smiled again, amused at her boy's idea of wickedness. Peaching was the only crime of which Arthur had a practical knowledge, and he had seen a poacher once.

"I pitied him," continued the little fellow, "and so I couldn't help kissing him!"

That simple sentence brought tears to Miss Alethea's eyes, and she drew her son closer, bestowing caresses upon him.

"You kissed the marquis, Master Arthur?" cried Alison, shocked and troubled. "I should have thought you would have known better. Why, your life wouldn't be safe with him—"

"Hush, Alison!" interrupted her mistress. "Do not talk to Arthur like that. Let him think the world all beautiful and its inhabitants all good while he may. The time will come soon enough when he will learn the bitter truth. Perhaps," she added, "that childish kiss may soften his lordship's heart, and he may go away and leave me in peace!"

"He didn't act as if his heart was much softened," declared the waiting-woman. "He thought Mr. Layne was in your boudoir, and he looked fierce enough to have killed you if he had seen you. He said he thought he heard a child's voice saying, 'Papa Richard!' What difference would it make to him if he had? It would have been none of his business—"

"Then he suspects Arthur's presence here?" murmured Miss Wycherly, in distress.

"I should judge so, my lady, from what his lordship said!"

"Perhaps I had better let Mr. Layne take charge of Arthur, Alison. He is desirous of doing so, and of introducing him as his adopted son. I have for years looked forward to such an event, yet as the time approaches I shrink from taking the irretrievable step. I do not want to give my boy up so entirely, never to see him except as a visitor of an hour, never to take him in my arms or to hear him call me mother! I must teach him to call me by another name when I send him from me—oh, Arthur!"

The young mother bowed her head upon her boy's curls, and wept unrestrainedly.

Alison made no attempt to comfort her, giving way to her own grief, but the lad kissed Miss Alethea with childish tenderness, and embraced her, declaring that he would never leave her even to go with Papa Richard, and that he never would call her by any other name than his dearest mother.

Alarmed by his tears and sobs, Miss Alethea banished all expression of her own sorrows, and set herself to allaying the storm she had aroused.

"You will do what mamma wants you to, I am very sorry, Arthur," she said. "If I decide to send you to Papa Richard, you will go quietly, knowing that you are making me happy, won't you?"

Master Arthur reserved his decision, and Miss Alethea exclaimed:

"Ah! I had forgotten what Papa Richard gave me in the corridor for you. Here it is!"

She drew from her pocket a letter without address, and gave it to the lad, who hastened with boyish delight to open it and peruse its contents.

It was a long letter, full of sportive allusions and pleasant promises, filled with instruction so given as to be eagerly relished—just the letter to delight an imaginative and very intellectual boy like Arthur.

Miss Wycherly read it over the boy's shoulder, sharing his joy, and when they came to the signature, she said:

"Not many boys have a 'Papa Richard' like you, my darling. You are very fortunate!"

"I know it, mamma. But I am more fortunate in having you! I wish I could be always with you, that I need never be away from you one minute! Oh, wouldn't it be jolly then?" and Arthur's eyes sparkled. "Somehow, mamma," he added, thoughtfully, "I don't seem to have any right to you! You steal up here, as if you were afraid to be seen, and you are afraid somebody may see me. Haven't I got as much right to you as Johnny Perkins has to his mother?"

"Yes, yes, my boy!"

"But why doesn't Papa Richard live here just as John Perkins lives with Nurse Mary?"

"I can't explain it to you now, Arthur," answered Miss Wycherly, in a pained tone. "I must not even think! When you are older you shall know all these things that puzzle you so now. Heaven grant you may cling to your mother then! But let us solve your Chinese puzzle, my boy. It is a pleasanter puzzle than those you have been trying to understand!"

Arthur brought his Oriental toy, and Miss Wycherly, dismissing her cares and griefs, gave herself up to the sweet task of amusing her son. They beat their heads together over the tiny bits of carved ivory, their laughter mingling, while Alison looked on with affectionate interest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

This strained passion doth you wrong, my lord;
Sweet earl, divorce not wisdom from your honour.

Shakespeare.

No thoughts within her bosom stirrs
But wakes some feeling dark and dread;
God keep thee from a doom like hers,
Of living when the hopes are dead.

Phillis Carey.

THE Castle clock had long since told the hour of midnight. The guests had retired to their chambers and their beds, and silence and darkness brooded heavily over the scene.

The lights had nearly all died out from the central building, but faint gleams issuing from the latticed windows of each of the towers announced that Miss Wycherly and the Lady Leopoldine had not yet retired.

These indications of wakefulness were regarded with joy and relief by Natalie Aiston, who glided among the trees dotting the lawn like a perturbed spirit, anxious, yet fearing to enter the Castle.

After her interview with Hugh Faulk, Natalie had returned to the hidden cottage, more than ever oppressed by a terrible sense of shame and suffering.

During the hours that had followed, she had brooded over her wrongs until the determination had sprung up, Minerva-like, in her soul, to have a full explanation with her traitor husband that very night, and settle her fate for ever.

"Better to know the worst!" she murmured, as she wandered in and out among the trees. "He cannot have utterly ceased to love me. If I plead to him, he may consent to do me justice. And I cannot live this way any longer. I must know if Hugh Faulk is right, and I am neither maid, wife, nor widow!"

Calmly herself, she stole towards the eastern tower, and entered by one of the long glass doors, purposely left unsecured by Alison Murray.

She then ascended the private staircase, and rapped at the door at the top of the little landing.

The waiting-woman admitted her.

"We expected you to-night, Miss Aiston," she said, as she ushered the poor young wife into Miss Wycherly's presence.

The lady greeted Natalie kindly, inquired how she liked the hidden cottage and its inmates, and finally said:

"I thought it very probable, Natalie, that you would return to-night for an interview with the earl. I have no objections to your visiting his rooms, for I believe you to be legally his wife. After you have talked with him, do not forget to let the Lady Leopoldine and myself know the result; for, as you are aware, the family honour is at stake in this matter, and we are greatly interested, apart from the regard we have conceived for you."

Natalie readily promised, and, somewhat encouraged, set out upon her momentous mission.

Quitting the ante-chamber and emerging into the corridor, she was about to proceed stealthily along when she observed a dark figure in the window-seat.

This figure belonged to Lord Waldemere, and he seemed to be keeping watch and ward upon the eastern tower.

Natalie was startled, and was tempted to turn back and apprise Miss Aletona of her discovery, but she reflected that this watcher's vigil might be known to Miss Wycherly. Besides, there was something so expressively mournful in the attitude of the marquis,

that the girl's heart was touched in his behalf, and she thought:

"He probably sleeps in one of the neighbouring rooms, and came to look out into the night from this great window. He has some great trouble too, I am sure."

The marquis looked at the young girl narrowly, but, satisfied that she was the Lady Leopoldine, did not arise from his seat or address one word to her. On the contrary, he turned his gaze to the window, as if he had sought the corridor for no other purpose than to obtain a view theremore.

Reassured by his manner, and convinced by his attire that he was a guest at the Castle, Natalie turned into the nearest passage, and hastened towards the grand staircase, which was composed of several flights, conducting from the lower hall to the topmost door, with broad landings on either side.

Ascending to the third floor, she sped along the wide gallery, turned into a narrower corridor, and then into another, reaching at length the western tower.

With her hand upon the knob of Lord Templecombe's door, her courage failed her for a moment, and her heart throbbed fiercely. Conquering her weakness by a strong effort, she opened the door and entered the chamber.

A lamp upon the centre table burned dimly, and by the feeble light Natalie observed, as she leaned against the closed door, a scene of confusion characteristic of her husband. His elegant dressing-case lay open upon the toilet-table, its silver fittings scattered here and there; his garments were strewn carelessly about, as if he had stepped from them into his bed; and upon the table were bottles and glasses, showing that he had indulged in what the old-time gentlemen termed a "night-cap" before retiring.

The earl was sleeping in the alcove, his heavy breathing almost startling his easily alarmed young wife; but, as he showed no signs of awakening, she glided forward, turned up the light and approached the bedside, regarding him attentively.

His face was flushed, giving relief to the faded look resulting from the light colour of hair, eyebrows, and complexion, and one of his arms was thrown carelessly upon the dainty satin coverlet.

How often she had seen him thus!

How often she had watched his slumbers!

But never as now, with indignant and sorrowful feelings welling up and struggling for the mastery in her soul!

Never as now, with detestation and scorn striving to quench the last spark of the love she had borne him.

She felt no return of the olden tenderness as she looked down upon that sleeper, and memory recalled the many times that head had been pillow'd upon her breast and those slumbers had been taken in her enfolding arms! Instead, her lip curled with scorn for him and scorn for herself that she should ever have yielded her heart to his control and her soul to his guidance.

For a few moments she stood motionless, looking upon him with gathering resolution, her refined and usually gentle face acquiring a look of sternness that made her seem an incarnate Nemesis, and then she laid her cold hand upon his forehead.

The touch disturbed him, and he stirred uneasily.

"Wake up, Elmer," she said, not removing her hand. "Wake quickly!"

The words, and her pressure on his brows, aroused the earl, who yawned, stretched out his limbs, and opened his eyes, his gaze resting upon Natalie.

Scarcely awake, he fancied himself at the cottage near the Grange, and he betrayed no surprise at his wife's presence, but murmured a pet name she had once loved.

Natalie heard it with impatience and rising anger.

"Wake up," she repeated, sternly. "You are not at the cottage, Elmer Keyes, but at Wycherly Castle."

The earl started and sprang up, uttering an exclamation of dismay, as a full comprehension of the scene burst upon his awakening senses.

"Why are you here, Natalie?" he cried. "Didn't I tell you the other night to leave this neighbourhood unless you would ruin me? How did you get into the Castle? How did you find my room?"

"Easily enough. I got in through an unsecured window. I saw you at your window the other evening, and so learned your chamber. I have come here to obtain a full understanding of my position in regard to you!"

The earl was bewildered by her determined manner, as well as by her unexpected presence in his apartment, and fearing she might make a scene and arouse the inmates of the Castle, he answered, soothingly:

"Why, of course, you are my wife, Natalie, my own wife!"

"But your letter—

"I wrote that because—because—why, merely as a joke! I wanted to test your love for me!" declared the earl, delighted at the cleverness of his excuse.

"Having tested it then, you are willing to acknowledge me as your wife?"

"Why, no, Natalie. The same obstacles exist now as when we were married," was the embarrassed response. "My father, you know, has other views for me, and I am dependent upon him, and—"

"Do not trouble yourself for more excuses," interrupted the young wife, with flashing eyes and curling lip. "Do not pollute your soul by farther falsehood, my lord!"

"My lord! What do you mean?"

"I mean that I know who you are! You have pretended to be Elmer Keyes, and the dependent son of a poor gentleman. Was not that the story? And all the time you were rich, with houses and lands and rent-rolls, and with an ancient name. You had no one to control your movements, as you well know, save your own lawless will. Do I not know you now, Earl of Templecombe?"

His lordship looked astonished, dismayed, and wrathful, as he thus found himself known to Natalie, and his reply was incoherent and unintelligible, his voice being choked with passion.

"You see I have fathomed your carefully kept secret," continued Natalie, coolly. "You never were more mistaken than in thinking I would tamely submit to my wrongs at your hands. When I received your last letter I was a weak and loving child; now I am a woman determined to battle for and obtain her rights!"

Lord Templecombe gave some minutes to reflection.

His soul was convulsed with alarm at the prospect before him, now that Natalie had become aroused against him, and he thought of various plans by which to silence her. Violence was the first thing that suggested itself, but his cowardly soul was not prepared for that, and he resolved to subdue her by a feigned affection, and induce her return to the Grange, if possible.

Sitting up erect in his bed, he assumed a reproachful look, and exclaimed:

"I will not deny my rank and wealth, Natalie, since you have discovered them. You have done very wrong to pry into a secret which, for various reasons, your husband has thought best to keep from you for a time. Do you call your conduct wifely? Have you shown a wifely obedience to my wishes?"

"But you said I was not your wife!"

"I repeat, I only said that to try your affection. So long as you show proper regard to my commands, you are as my wife!"

"Cease, Elmer," cried Natalie. "Before you talk further in that strain, I want to tell you that I have discovered the loss of our marriage register, and that I fully understand who abstracted it, and why. You know well that you have no intention of introducing me as your countess. Yet I will accept no other terms from you!"

"You must be a lunatic," returned his lordship, throwing off the thin mask of affection he had assumed. "I am willing to support you handsomely, to allow you a good income, but I have no intention of acknowledging you as my wife!"

"But that is what I claim—what I demand!"

"Your impudence is unparalleled! Do you imagine that the Earl of Templecombe is such a pariah in his own circles of society that he must stoop to yours for a bride?"

"Then why did you marry me, Elmer?"

"Because," declared the earl, recklessly and truthfully, "I could win you in no other way. I was bewitched by your pretty face, so like another I know and love—and when I offered you my love you were so innocent that you could understand nothing but marriage. I thought the matter over a long time, undecided what to do. I perfectly understood that a form of marriage was necessary, and I proposed to my man Roke to officiate as clergyman. There were objections to such a step, the principal one being that we could not obtain possession of the church long enough for our purpose without the presence of some person connected with it. And so we had a private marriage by the clergyman—but the marriage was illegal, on account of my assumed name!"

"But if you knew it to be illegal, why did you subtract the leaf of the register?"

"To put the matter beyond all doubt, and to prevent your making me trouble. The clergyman who married us is dead. So I have matters all my own way!"

The stern look faded from Natalie's face, and she leaned forward and asked, with a strange mixture of eagerness and solemnity:

"Elmer, tell me, as you hope for mercy at the last great day, did you never love me?"

The earl forced a laugh.

"I supposed I did," he answered. "I fancied you at least, but you must see that I never loved you enough to make you my legal wife. You loved me and that was enough. It was certainly very delightful," he added, complacently, "to be loved for myself alone, and in such a fervent, self-sacrificing way. It has exalted my self-esteem amazingly!"

Natalie groaned.

"Don't take the affair so to heart, Natalie. You certainly could not expect—to think the matter over coolly—that I would acknowledge you. Why, your uncle is only a yeoman, who tills the soil for his bread. And your mother—that would be the hardest part of it! I couldn't own that my wife bore her mother's maiden name, because that mother had none other to bestow upon her! Of all the families in the country yours would be the last with which I should choose an alliance. You are a fitter bride for Roke than me!"

Natalie's eyes flashed indignantly at this insult.

"Take care, Elmer," she said; "I will not hear such words from your lips! You shall respect your wife—at least in words!"

"My wife! Disabuse yourself of that notion, Natalie. The sooner you do, the sooner you'll be happy. Go home to Aiston Grange, and I will give you a handsome dowry, and you can marry Hugh Fauld and queen it among your neighbours. Refuse, and announce your claims upon me, and I will denounce you as a lunatic, or as a woman who wishes to levy black-mail upon me!"

The earl spoke determinedly, and his poor young wife began to realize the obstacles in her path, and to see that if she would obtain justice it could not be done by denunciations and loud outcry.

She must proceed carefully, working, as weak and defenceless creatures always do, with cunning and stratagem.

"Elmer," she replied, as calmly as she could, "speak no more to me of Hugh Fauld! He is nothing to you nor to me. It would have been better, perhaps, if I had married him, but I threw away his priceless love for a worthless fancy, and the fate I have earned I must meet! I am bound to you while we both shall live, and I will never relinquish my claims. I will prevent any second marriage on your part by declaring the truth to the lady you may win."

The earl muttered a malediction.

"You said, Elmer, that I look like one you love. You mean the Lady Leopold, your cousin?"

"The—! Where did you learn her name?"

"I inquired of a woodman, when I saw you out with a party of riders. I do look like her ladyship, but I am only a copy, while she is the splendid original. When you came to the Grange, did you love the Lady Leopold?"

"Yes. I have loved her ever since I knew her. Since you know so much, you may as well know the rest. The Lady Leopold Wycherly will be my bride!"

"But she does not love you. I mean her ladyship looked more tenderly upon the handsome, dark-eyed gentleman who rode at her other side. Mr. Montmaur the woodman called him."

"He is her relative, as well as I, and she must bestow some attention upon him. She will marry me, as I have said. And woe be to you if you attempt to poison her mind against me! You would not be believed by her ladyship; and you would find that my vengeance would be swift and sure!"

His lordship scowled darkly as he thus threatened, and Natalie began to have some perception that there were depths in his soul of which she had never before formed even a suspicion.

She shuddered before the look he gave her, as if she had stood upon the brink of an awful precipice, and gazed down into an impenetrable and terrible abyss. But she did not falter in her resolution.

If she permitted him to cast her upon the world, homeless and nameless, what might be her fate?

Honour and happiness lay only through a recognition of her marriage, and she was determined to obtain it, if she must yield up her life at the moment of doing so.

"I will make no promise, Elmer—Vane, I mean!" she said. "No fear of your cowardly vengeance shall deter me from what I feel to be just and right. I am sure, if I seek it, I can obtain an interview with her ladyship, and she will befriend me. Think over what I have said to you. Perhaps you may decide that it will be wise for you to yield to my demands!"

"Never! Where are you staying, Natalie? At the village inn?"

"No. My residence I prefer to keep secret."

"Are you using my name in any way?"

"I have not yet done so. I do not ask to call myself a countess, Vane. Heaven knows that in my love for you there never entered a grain of calculation. I would have worked to aid in our mutual support! I do not want your money or your title, but I do want recognition as your wife!"

As Natalie showed an inclination to give way to tears, the earl began to urge her to accede to his demands. As she continued to refuse to return to Aiston Grange, he pictured a pleasant retreat in the country somewhere, where she should pass as a young widow, adding:

"With your beauty and the income I would bestow upon you, there is no doubt but you might impose upon some person of great respectability, and marry him. You might win a wealthy gentleman, even a titled one—"

The insulted wife interrupted him by a gesture.

"Do not tempt me farther to denounce you on the spot," she said, with a certain majesty. "I shall leave you now, Lord Templecombe, but I shall return again. Until you agree to do me justice, I will dog your every footstep, and will appear to you at moments when you least expect it! By day and by night I will come to your side, and you shall not know a minute's peace from my importunities. And if you then continue to refuse me, I will denounce you openly. Do not think I love you now! I believe it is hatred. I feel for you!"

She turned—as the earl pleaded for her to remain, and conjured her by her past love, which he knew must still linger in her heart, to grant his desires—and swept from the apartment with a haughty defiant air.

He sank back on his pillow alarmed and almost paralyzed with wrath, wondering what he should do to avert the danger with which she threatened him.

As Natalie passed through the corridors, she stumbled inadvertently, and the sound brought Basil Montmaur to his door.

He was not seen by the young girl, and he regarded her with surprise and sorrow, believing her, as before, to be his betrothed.

As she passed on, he remembered Leopold's declaration that it was not her whom he had beheld entering Lord Templecombe's room, and he noiselessly stole after Natalie to see whether she was about to proceed.

"She must be asleep," he thought, in an agony of distress. "She has been to Vane's room to-night. I must convince her to-morrow that she is a somnambulist!"

He followed her downstairs towards the Lady Leopold's chambers, every moment deepening his conviction that she was his betrothed. He feared to approach her too closely, lest he should awaken her, and his movements were very subdued, almost noiseless.

As Natalie approached the tower chambers, one of the doors opened, and the Lady Leopold herself, one of Basil's utter bewilderment, appeared on the threshold. She saw only the midnight visitors, and, with words of endearment, folded her arms around poor Natalie, drawing her into her lighted rooms. Doubting the evidence of his senses, and plunged into a state of stupefaction at the appearance of a second Lady Leopold, Basil could only stare at the door which had been closed almost in his face.

(To be continued.)

A CORRESPONDENT states that a violent storm of thunder, lightning, hail, and snow broke over Banbury (about eighteen miles from Aberdeen) at three o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th ult. The train by which the writer travelled, when near the station of Craithes, suddenly rushed into fields white with snow that lay in some places at least six inches deep.

THE EX-KING OF HANOVER.—King George is more tenacious than ever. Only very recently he repented to a deputation from Hanover begging him to abdicate in favour of his son—that "he held his crown from God, and would only give it back to God on his deathbed." A few days ago only he said to an officer,

"In reorganizing my army I shall resume the old red uniform. I will no longer allow my soldiers to resemble the Prussians." It has been calculated at Hanover that there will remain to the king a private fortune of fifty millions of thalers. It is supposed that he will come to England, and take his seat next session in the House of Lords as the Duke of Cumberland.

THE FATAL PANIC IN PARIS DURING THE EMPEROR'S FEAST DAY.—In the Rue de Rivoli the two currents of promenaders met together, and a frightful crash ensued. Dresses were torn, families separated—the confusion, in fact, was awful. The terror-stricken people climbed up the iron railings of the gardens of the Tuilleries, while lots of poor women and frightened children were hoisted up to the parapets and terraces by their distracted fathers and brothers. One poor mother, who witnessed the trampling to death of her infant, is now a raving lunatic. At least 1,000 persons were maimed on the bridge; women ran madly along the parapet; others fainted, and were trodden to death, and children also. Five corpses were deposited in one of the halls of the Palais Législatif, op-

posite the bridge, as well as about 170 wounded. At the apothecary's shop at the corner of the Rue de Bourgogne several more corpses were to be seen, and others were found in a house in course of construction at the corner of the quay where numbers of the wounded had sought for shelter, and some of whom expired there. As to the shoes, hats, coats, and petticoats picked up by the police it would be impossible to enumerate them. The real cause of the catastrophe, it is said, has been ascertained to be that a number of pickpockets organized a panic beforehand, shouted danger when there was none, and unfortunately succeeded but too well in carrying out their infamous design. Several arrests have taken place.

STATISTICS.

PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.—In the session just ended the returns, as against those of the session of 1865, have been respectively bills against which petitions endorsed for hearing before the referees were lodged: 1865, 309 bills; 1866, 252 bills. Petitions endorsed for hearing before the referees: 1865, 1,447 bills; 1866, 1,119 bills. Reports made by the referees: 1865, 110 bills; 1866, 89 bills. Petitions against bills reported upon by the referees: 1865, 318 bills; 1866, 174 bills. Bills whose promoters objected to the locus standi of petitioners, and were heard before the referees: 1865, 92 bills; 1866, 74 bills. Petitions in respect of which objections to *locus standi* were decided by the referees: 1865, 142 bills; 1866, 190 bills. Times the referees sat: 1865, 107 times; 1866, 112 times. In 1845, the great railway mania year, there were 225 petitions lodged for private bills. Of these, 120 were passed, the remaining 105 having been rejected, withdrawn, or postponed till next session! Of the 120 new bills passed, 107 related to new lines. We have given above the bills petitioned for in 1865 and 1866, and supposing that it may be interesting to know the progressive increase from one interval to another—in 1850, 175 bills were petitioned for, and 145 were passed; in 1855, 270 bills were petitioned for, and 226 were passed; in 1860, 311 bills were petitioned for, of which 221 were passed; in 1865 the number of petitions was 595, and the number of bills which received the royal assent 392. In the last session the applications for private bills were much larger, namely, 633, as against the much smaller number in the previous year, that is in 1865, 595 bills.

INCOME-TAX RETURNS.—The *Examiner* observes that as there are more small incomes than large ones, we might expect to see in the returns of the number of persons in trade and professions chargeable with income-tax under Schedule D a regular diminution of the number with every advance of income, and so it is up to the incomes above 900*l.* and not exceeding 1,000*l.* Here we are surprised to see a very abrupt and considerable falling off in the number, for one would have supposed that class of incomes to be a very large one. They only amount, however, to 1,070 in the returns. But what is more startling is to find the large increase in the number of the next class, the number of incomes between 1,000*l.* and 2,000*l.* amounting to 7,374. So that there are nearly as many incomes between 1,000*l.* and 2,000*l.* a year as between 500*l.* and 600*l.* the number of the latter being 7,428, and one finds the same proportion in the years '63-'64 as in '64-'65. How, then, are we to account for the small number of incomes between 900*l.* and 1,000*l.*, especially compared with the very large number between 1,000*l.* and 2,000*l.*? Are the nine hundred a peculiarly evasive class? And does honesty spring up again in the next class, who can perhaps afford it, between 1,000*l.* and 2,000*l.*? Be that as it may, similar facts appear in a higher grade of incomes. From the class between one and two thousand a year the number declines considerably. Between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.* it is 2,204; between 3,000*l.* and 4,000*l.* it is 1,138; but in the next class, between 4,000*l.* and 5,000*l.* it drops abruptly to 627. This, however, would not much surprise us, if in the next class, between 5,000*l.* and 10,000*l.* it did not spring up to 1,283, and it appears that there are more incomes by forty-five between five and ten thousand a year than between three and four thousand. From the former class the number declines with the advances of income till it comes to 107 of 50,000*l.* and upwards. In the previous year the number was ninety-one. There has thus been an increase of sixteen incomes earned by trade or professions of 50,000*l.* and upwards. The total number charged with income-tax last year was 332,431 against 308,416 in the preceding year, a considerable increase. In '63-'64 the average of incomes chargeable was little above 300*l.* a year. In the last year the average reached 319, a handsome advance, arguing either much increase in property or some increase in probity, doubtless in both concurrently; as people get more at their ease they are less disposed to evade their obligations to the State.



[THE CONSPIRATORS.]

THE KNIGHT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER VI.

THE day subsequent to Maud Ruthven's journey to London, while she was still occupied with her ministrations to the invalid, a figure, wearing the robes of a friar, emerged from the shade of a tall pillar, which had sheltered him from observation, as he stood peering into the chamber where the Earl of Lennox lay. His whole frame shook as he took his way along the street, and when he was beyond earshot, he broke into the fiercest threats.

Chancing to meet a group of gentlemen walking arm in arm, he checked himself, as if fearful of betraying too much, and maintained a grim silence till he reached a remote part of the city, where stood a great, rambling, many-gabled, and dormer-windowed dwelling, which spoke of bygone days.

The walls were matted with ivy, and the roof grey with lichen, and the whole exterior beset with large, echoing chambers, odd nooks and corners, dim winding staircases, and, perhaps, secret panels. The narrow windows had been sunk deep into the stone, and provided with shutters, and the massive door creaked dismally on its rusty hinges as the dark, saturnine man who had watched the movements in Cecil Hastings's sick-room attempted to open it.

Cautiously he drew the heavy bolts after him and stalked through the hall and several apartments, all pervaded by that disagreeable dampness we find in deserted houses, and with moth-eaten cushions and faded hangings meeting the eye at every turn. Finally, he drew back a panel, and looked in on a party of gentlemen gathered around an oaken table.

Though it was mid-day, the shutters had not been drawn aside, and the room and its occupants were revealed to the gazer by the light of two rusty lamps, suspended to the ceiling. The whole party were clad in various disguises, and yet among them might be seen many of the gentry and a few of the nobility of England, with here and there a Scotch malcontent.

The most prosperous reigns have had their conspiracies, and Elizabeth Tudor's had not escaped this infection. The persons gathered in that lonely old house were, to use plain language, conspirators against the crown.

Those who favoured the cause of Mary Queen of Scots, or fancied that they had been slighted by Elizabeth or noblemen high in favour at court, were readily induced to join in the conspiracy, and other circum-

stances at this time deepened the thirst for revenge rankling in traitorous hearts.

When, six years previous, a plot to place the Duke of Norfolk and the exiled Scottish Queen on the throne of England had been set on foot, the Earl of Westmoreland had been among the insurgents, who had appealed to arms, and taken the field with a formidable force, expecting the concurrence of all the malcontents in the realm.

Norfolk himself, however, not only discountenanced these proceedings, but employed his whole interest to suppress the rebellion, which being effected in a short time, the queen was so well pleased with his conduct that she released him from the Tower, only exacting a promise that he would proceed no farther in his negotiations with the Queen of Scots.

At first, Westmoreland resolved to disband his army and flee, but the second and perhaps noblest thought of his later years drove him to cast himself on Elizabeth Tudor's mercy. She treated him with the same kindness she had shown the master spirit of the plot, and though the duke afterwards broke his promise, and received summary punishment, she had no thought of making his former confederates sharers of his fate.

Still, Westmoreland had gone abroad soon after these events, and on his return circumstances I have already described kindled into flame the rancorous spirit which had been aroused during a visit to Philip of Spain, the discarded suitor of Queen Bess, when he received the high place occupied by the Earl of Lennox at court, and that she openly favoured his assiduous attentions to her ward.

With his heart full of treason, stratagem and strife, he had met the members of the band, and though he had sworn allegiance to Elizabeth of England and solemnly promised never again to take up arms, save in her defence, he was now ready to join in any scheme which would quench his thirst for revenge.

That was a stormy period in European affairs; the tyranny of the Spanish monarch had driven the people to arms, and Holland and Zealand had revolted, and under the auspices of the Prince of Orange, the whole Batavian provinces united in league against his power.

By a solemn embassy, the Flemings had offered Elizabeth the sovereignty of their dominions, providing she would exert her power in their defence, but as she was never ambitious of conquests or new acquisitions, she declined their offer. She sent them, however, a sum of money, and concluded a treaty with them, in which she stipulated to assist them with five thousand foot and five thousand horse, at the charge of the Flemings.

The English queen was extremely anxious to support an interest in Scotland, because that country alone afforded her enemies the only means of attacking her, and because she was sensible that the Guises had advised Mary to have recourse to the powerful protection of Philip. He, under the name of the Pope, was plotting to send a large force of Spaniards and Italians into Ireland, and such men as the Earl of Westmoreland were only too ready to favour the foreign foe.

It was one of their secret meetings we are attempting to describe, and for an instant the seeming friar who had left Lennox House half-frenzied with rage, stood gazing at the group of insurgents, and then sprang into their midst, startling them by his abrupt entrance. The new comer pushed back his cowl, revealing a stern visage, and the word "Westmoreland" ran from lip to lip like wildfire.

"Yes, yes, Westmoreland, indeed," replied the earl, with a hollow laugh, "but my disguise must be skilful, for you did not at first recognize me, and thought some good father of the Church had come to shrive your souls!"

No little merriment followed this, but Westmoreland was in no mood to enjoy it, and two or three times endeavoured to hush their boisterous laughter and proceed to business.

"I faith, friends," exclaimed the Earl of Northumberland, who was a prominent member of the band, "it is a common report that his lordship was drowned in the waters of the Thames almost a year ago, and methinks we had better not keep company with ghosts, lest when we need their aid they see fit to vanish into air."

Westmoreland smiled grimly and replied:

"Though I have foiled the queen and her favourite Lennox, that is by no means a pleasing topic. It was a terrible blow I received from a floating timber as I tried to sweep past with Maud Ruthven clasped in my arms, and I shall bear the scar to my dying day!" and he laid his hand significantly on his forehead, and muttering an oath, went on:

"The hated Lennox reported the affair and the author of it, to Elizabeth Tudor, for I had flung my gauntlet into his boat before sinking mine, that he might know his foe. Hours afterwards he came with a guard from Richmond to ascertain whether I were still alive, and capture if possible the boatman who had been my accomplice. He had gone ashore to the Red Lion, where he was fool enough to tell the story of his alliance with me, and relate every particular of our afternoon's work, by the tap-room fire. Lennox and an official from the court had been concealed by the

landlord where they could hear what was passing, and when he concluded, the bailiff took him to jail."

"And has he been tried?" asked one of the conspirators.

"Not yet. At the time when the trial should have taken place the Earl of Lennox, who would have been the principal witness in the case, was too ill to appear, and since then, after journeying from his old castle to celebrate his inamorata's birthday, he has been on the very verge of the grave, and therefore Mark Darell is still awaiting his trial. As for me, I fancy the queen now believes me dead, though for months she kept spies on the watch; and I, an English earl, dare not appear in yonder streets unless in the disguises I have been obliged to assume."

"And how did you escape from drowning?" inquired a conspirator who had recently joined the band of malcontents.

"When I awoke to consciousness, I was lying in a peasant's hut, with the swift rush of the waters and Maud Ruthven's shrieks no longer ringing in my ears. For a time everything was vague and unreal, but gradually I recalled the events of the three days which had preceded that memorable scene on the river; the rage with which I had watched Lennox when he bore her fainting from the abbey, the hour when he sat at her feet with his lute, and his attentions while the royal party swept down the Thames. I lived over again that exciting chase; the desperation with which I had sunk the boat, and declared that Maud should die with me, and the fearful moment when I had to let go my hold. At length, I heard a step, and felt a gentle hand binding up my forehead, and then a voice asked:

"Is he no better?"

"I glanced around, and saw two figures I had good reason to remember."

"And who were they?"

"One was my foster-brother, the other his wife, and she had grown to womanhood on my town estate, her father having been my porter, and had the most picturesque little lodge in the world. From him I soon learned that as he was rowing down the Thames, just after my misfortunes, I had drifted towards his wherry, and he had drawn me into it, supposing me to be a stranger. When, however, he recognized me he was startled and shocked, and took me home to see what could be done for my restoration. My mother died in my boyhood, and in her last moments she called him to her bedside, and required him to make a solemn promise that he would be faithful to my interests as long as life should last. He now kept his word, and when, on his next visit to London, he learned that my accomplice had been arrested and thrown into jail, and the authorities were on the quiet to ascertain whether I had indeed perished among the waters of the Thames, he assisted me in eluding their vigilance and carrying out other plans which I formed in my retreat. Thanks to our united endeavours, I have not yet been called to answer to the royal authority of the land for endangering the life of a lady whom I madly love, but who has the misfortune to be the queen's ward!"

There was a brief pause, during which Westmoreland paced nervously to and fro, and then Northumberland asked:

"Prithee, how fares it with the Earl of Lennox? It was rumoured yesternight that he could not live till morning, but I have heard no death-knell ringing from the church to towers."

"Nay, nay," exclaimed Westmoreland, sternly, "he is alive, and when I joined you I had just come from Lennox House, where I was watching Lady Maud, as she kept her vigils by his side!" and a volley of curses broke from his lips.

"What, my lord," cried one of the band, "if Lennox should recover? Should you allow him to carry off the prize?"

"No, no," cried Westmoreland, passionately; "even if she loves him he shall never, never stand at the altar with Maud Ruthven. The coronet worn by the countesses of our House shall span her brow, and she shall be mine—I have sworn it."

A low murmur rang through the group of malcontents, and Sir John Dorwent said:

"No man among us can blame you, and I cordially wish you success and Lady Maud Ruthven a more eligible match than a carpet knight like Cecil Hastings; but now we must proceed to business—it's seldom we can meet so many noblemen as are present to-day. My Lord of Westmoreland, will it please you to tell our friends how matters are progressing?"

"Everything seems to go on prosperously," observed his lordship. "Elizabeth Tudor has quenched it long enough, and it will be a happy day for England when she is deposed. Foreign emissaries are already in London, though I scarcely dare breathe the intelligence here, in our rendezvous, and I have just received a letter from King Philip which is full of encouragement. He assures us that his fleet will soon sail from Cadiz, and requests that some of the

most daring members of our band take possession of the coast, and surrender Ireland to the enemy. Proud as Elizabeth Tudor is, she will grace the triumph of Philip of Spain, and her pride will be humbled in the dust!"

He did not add that he had been promised a dukedom for his influence, but such was the fact, and he was already looking forward to his prospective dignity.

"And what is to be the queen's doom?" asked the new member to whom I have before alluded, and who had registered his name on their record book as Gilbert Ainsworth. As he spoke he leaned forward and laid his hands upon the table, trifling meanwhile with some certain papers that had lain there during the meeting.

"Hark ye, Ainsworth; that point is not fully settled, but what can we expect when we record the fact that Philip II. is a rejected lover of our present queen, and has this private wrong, as well as many public ones, to avenge? Whether she will be put to death or subjected to mental labour for the remainder of her life, I cannot say, but be assured she cannot flaunt at Richmond, Windsor, or Hampton Court, but if she be permitted to live, which I strongly doubt, her condition will be less enviable than that of the galley slave!"

During this recital, Gilbert Ainsworth had listened with keen interest, and expressing his thanks for so full a statement of the case in question, he sank back in his chair. Plans for enlisting others whose position would give them an opportunity for doing great service for their cause, with minor particulars of the conspiracy, were now discussed, and not long afterwards the meeting ended, the conspirators stealing away at different periods, and taking care to keep in the shadows of the ivy-draped walls as long as possible.

Leaving them to their guilty purposes, we will return to the Lord of Lennox and Maud Ruthven. From the hour when she entered his chamber he had begun to improve, but his system had been so reduced that at a consultation of the best physicians in London, it was decided that his lordship must recruit his wasted energies under a more genial sky. Reluctant as he was to quit England, he at length yielded to the persuasions of his friends and medical adviser and at length commenced preparations for a continental tour.

Before he sailed he had a long and confidential interview with the queen with regard to her young ward, but what passed then he kept a profound secret, and though Maud's eyes eagerly questioned him, he preserved a rigid silence.

After his conference with her royal protectress, he followed the girl to the rose-room, to which she had retired, and found her reclining in the same luxurious chair she had occupied on the night of her arrival at Richmond. Sinking at her feet, he clasped both her hands and looked long and earnestly into her face.

"Maud," he at length murmured, "once more I must thank you for all your kindness, but I cannot tell you how hard it is to say farewell. Her majesty has given her consent to my sending you an occasional letter, and I only wait to know if they would be welcome to you."

"Most assuredly, my lord."

The young man lifted her hand to his lips, and with a half-smothered "Heaven bless you," left the rose-room.

An hour later the vessel which bore him away was speeding over the waters, and Maud Ruthven's heart wandered with him across the channel to a clime

Where cleanders flushed the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
And crossing oft we saw the glisten
Of ice far off on a mountain head.

CHAPTER VII.

The winter passed slowly to Lady Maud, for though she was admired and flattered at court, and many a nobleman knelt at her shrine, no society could compensate for the pleasant companionship of the Earl of Lennox.

Several letters had been interchanged, and his always contained some pressed flower—the slender campanili which grew, "By baye the peacock's neck in hue;" the myrtle, the orange-blossom, and now and then a bit of ivy from the ruins of the Coliseum or the palace gardens of the Caesars. These letters contained no declarations of love, but the interest the writer evinced in his beautiful correspondent rendered them indeed a pleasure, and they were kept and read and reread till every sentence must have been familiar.

Spring came with its balmy breezes, its violet-spangled banks, its fresh grass, its blossoming hawthorn and budding roses, and though the earl had not fixed the time for his return, Maud was eagerly counting the days which would probably intervene before his arrival.

May-morning dawned as gloriously as that of her sixteenth birthday, and though Maud would gladly have declined the honour, she was crowned queen at an early hour, this ceremony being followed by a picturesque dance on the green, in which the whole court was to participate.

The jester was moving to and fro with his cap and bells, and several harlequins assisted him in affording merriment for the spectators.

Master Woodford was evidently in his most genial mood, and when the queen's ward began to grow weary after her early rising, and ramble through the park, he said, with unwonted earnestness:

"Nay, nay, Lady Maud; there is to be some archery in the glen yonder, and I believe it will be unusually fine."

As he spoke he pointed to a green glen, the targets of which a gay pennon was floating, and the various other implements of archery, with the fanciful stand for the judges.

The girl assented, for Master Woodford had rendered her many a favour, and she could not find it in her heart to deny this request. She therefore turned towards the place fitted up for the archery, and when the trumpeters belonging to the royal orchestra made the air ring with their shrill blasts, the archers advanced clad in a graceful costume of Lincoln green, and wearing scarlet caps, and a shaft of arrows, while they carried a twanging bow in one hand.

The competitors in the Olympic games could scarcely have been more eager to win the laurel wreath than these were to gain the golden bauble which was to be bestowed by the queen in person, and arrow after arrow went flashing through the air.

Among the archers, however, there was one who had just appeared in the royal grounds, and thrice with wondrous skill he cleff'd the target. All this seemed like the work of a moment, and then he sprang to the queen, who leaned forward, exclaiming:

"Welcome back, my Lord of Lennox! Methinks you have practised archery in your absence; but mayhap you would prefer to receive the prize from the hand of a May-queen. Maud, Maud, here is a pleasant surprise—our invalid earl has returned from the Continent, and we trust you will not refuse to confer the reward of his recent skill!"

The girl's heart was too full for speech, but the sudden crimson which surged over her face, the light that shot into her dusky eyes, and the tremor of the small hand she extended to receive the bauble from the queen, were incontestable signs of her joy. The prize was a golden arrow tipped with a single diamond, and now the earl bent gracefully to receive it, his whole appearance betokening his pride and pleasure in accepting it from Maud Ruthven.

"What," whispered the queen, "have you no word, child? You are making this scene a pretty pantomime! Speak, speak, child!"

The girl hesitated an instant, and then said, timidly:

"My lord, in the queen's name I present you the prize you have won by your skill in archery!"

The earl earnestly expressed his acknowledgments, and added, in a tone only audible to Maud's ear:

"I trust the day of my return is to be a pleasant omen for the future; heaven grant that I may be successful in winning another prize I am endeavouring to gain!"

The ceremony of conferring the golden arrow being over, greetings were interchanged with the lords and ladies present, and among them might be seen Lady Imogen Herbert.

She was a fine specimen of the old Saxon type of beauty, and, ere Lady Maud's arrival, had been considered the fairest maid of honour in Elizabeth Tudor's retinue.

It will be remembered that she had watched Maud with jealous rage on her first appearance at court, and, to confess the truth, when Signor Velletri had acted as music-master to the queen's ward, she had often offered to attend her, in the hope of advancing his interests and drawing her into the snare which he had woven.

He would at once have been banished from his position in the royal household after having presumed to declare his love to his beautiful pupil, and his language to Maud indicated that he was about to leave England, as he had bade her a long farewell; but since then he had held secret meetings with Lady Imogen at Richmond and in London, and been apriized of all Maud's movements.

The queen, however, did not suspect Lady Imogen's antipathy, for she was a practised woman of the world, and managed affairs with consummate tact. She still retained her post in the royal family, and on the day of the earl's return, with her rich blue robe, and the light gold of her hair floating in heavy waves from her helmet-shaped cap, looked a fitting counterpart to those old pictures of Boadicea, the Druid queen.

In well-modulated tones she welcomed the Earl of Lennox to his native land; told him how much his presence had been missed at court; and expressed the hope they might have a pleasant summer, and not wear such rueful faces as they had last Christmas, on account of his absence and the anxiety they had felt as to his ultimate recovery. Cecil Hastings listened calmly, and gave her a courteous reply, but had he suspected the truth, he would have been astonished and disconcerted beyond measure, and taken care to guard his treasure from the subtle influence which was still scheming to effect their estrangement.

As soon as he could leave the company gathered around the stand built for the queen, the judges and the orchestra, he offered his arm to Maud Ruthven, and drew her into the palace gardens, and to the spot where he had met her during the masquerade, and sinking at her feet, gazed at her bright young face.

"My lord," murmured the girl, "you have given me quite a surprise."

"And was it a pleasant one to you?"

"Oh, yes, yes; I had no idea that you were the successful archer till you sprang towards the queen, and then I could scarcely believe the evidence of my own senses."

"During the tedious months of my absence I have often tried to picture the scene of our meeting when I should return to England, and I purposely kept the secret."

"Prithee, did my royal protectress know?"

"No, no; I feared that she might betray me, and therefore I would not trust even her in this matter. We cast anchor in the familiar waters of the Thames at eight o'clock, and then I hastened to Richmond as fast as my favourite steed could carry me. Master Woodford, the jester, assisted me in preparing for the archery, and though I fancied my hand unsteady, I won the prize, and it was a proud and happy moment when I received it from you."

He made a brief pause, and continued:

"Lady Maud, do you recollect the night when I met you here, and wreathed a few water-lilies amid your heavy curls, and offered you a simple birthday gift?"

The girl bowed, and he went on:

"This golden arrow I value only for its associations, and I trust you will allow me a pleasure similar to that I enjoyed during the memorable masquerade," and he fastened the arrow amid those dark tresses, adding:

"I have ventured to bring you another birthday gift from the Continent, but I trust the anniversary will be celebrated at Lennox Castle."

"Lennox Castle," echoed Maud, in the utmost surprise, "what do you mean, my lord?"

"List, and I will explain; before I left England her majesty promised to spend two months at least of the present summer at my ancestral home with her young ward, and I indeed wish it were far more worthy the visitors I expect to entertain. To-day I shall remind the queen of her promise, and then leave you a short time to see that it is rendered habitable at least."

They were now interrupted, and the earl led the radiant Maud back to the royal pavilion. As they left the gardens, a tall figure rose from a shelter of a clump of trees, which had screened him from view, and watched the pair with fiery eyes—it was Luigi Veltte!

"Aha," he muttered, "it maddens me to mark her smiles and blushes! Shall I follow them? Shall I snatch her from him in the gaze of the whole court? Nay, that were certain rain. I will bide my time, but my hour will come, however long it may be deferred! Methinks Lady Imogen's heart feels scarcely lighter than mine, though her lips wear a smile, and she seems to cast no shadows on the rest of the revelers."

The day wore away in mirth and festivity, and when evening had closed in, the Earl of Lennox requested a private interview with the queen. It was granted, and the next morning he took his leave of the court, and set out for Lennox Castle, but as he parted with Maud, he whispered:

"Your royal protectress will keep her word, and in a month at least I shall return to you; will you be in readiness to accompany me to Lennox Castle?"

The girl blushingly assented. And not long afterwards, assembling the ladies of her court, the queen said:

"We have received a most urgent invitation to spend a month or two at Lennox Castle, and shall doubtless go there early in June. Only two of our most elderly ladies will be useful in that retirement, and therefore you may consider yourselves disbanded, returning to your homes till we come back to Richmond, or Hampton Court, wherever it may suit our royal pleasure."

The announcement created no little sensation among the maid-servants, but surprised as they were, they were too well accustomed to court etiquette to attempt to interfere with the queen's plans, and four weeks

after they saw a brilliant cavalcade wind from the courtyard.

The royal guard rode somewhat in advance, for in those perilous times it was not deemed safe for England's sovereign to journey without attendant men-at-arms; then came Elizabeth superbly arrayed and mounted, her ward and the two other ladies who were to accompany her; the Earl of Lennox and a large band of retainers, and several noblemen, who were to return immediately after seeing her safely established at Lennox Castle.

Such was the procession that wound its way from Richmond, and took its way on a journey to be so eventful to two at least of the party. England was in all her glory, and Elizabeth Tudor felt a thrill of pride at the thought that she ruled this fair country.

Above them rose the bright, serene sky of June, now and then flecked with a fleecy cloud sailing to and fro like a swan on the placid surface of some blue lake; the wind was soft and fragrant as if it had been swept from a land of eternal summer, the greenwood had never seemed so rich, nor the foliage of the woods so delicate; violets and cuckoo buds smiled from the wayside, and the wild columbine crept over the rocks, and when they crossed the moorlands, they found them purple with heather and gay with golden gorse.

Afar on the hills the shepherds watched their flocks, as they crooked the tender grass, or lay grouped on the turf, and the rest of the peasantry were busy with their June work.

At length they reached the base of a lofty hill, and pointing upwards, Cecil Hastings said:

"Yonder is my home!"

Maud glanced towards it with no little interest, for she liked antiquity, and this was antique in the extreme. The earl's forefathers had been feudal barons, and had lived like so many miniature kings, in the old castle, with their trains of followers, who bore pompous titles, similar to those of the officers of the royal court.

There was a massive tower surrounded by lofty walls, with banners flaunting from the battlements, and a deep moat, spanned by a quaint bridge. Two men-at-arms were stationed on the battlements to watch the progress of the royal party, and as they gained the foot of the hill, the castle bell sent forth a merry chime, and the old countess moved into the hall to await her guests, and several of the neighbouring gentry gathered around her.

Not long afterwards, the procession filed across the bridge, and as they entered, the young host said, in a low tone:

"Maud, it is sweet to see you in my own home."

They were now escorted to a suite of apartments fitted up with a splendour that astonished the royal visitant, and made it seem as if the luxuries of a Turkish sultana had been transferred to that old castle.

The walls were draped with gorgeous brocade or velvet; the footcloths were marvels of taste and elegance, and the lamps, the metallic mirrors, the rare paintings and statuary, the chairs, tables, and musical instruments, only such as a man of refinement would select, and immense wealth purchase.

"Here too you will find a rose-room," observed his lordship, and his guests gazed around with wondering delight. Above them rose a ceiling which had been skilfully frescoed to represent the morning sky, and two or three cherub heads were visible amid the soft clouds. Hangings of rose-coloured velvet fell over the walls and windows, looped back with delicate marble hands, which gleamed out white and fair, and was almost as symmetrical as Lady Maud's roses were carved in the exquisite work of the single chair, and the lamp, of some rare porcelain, was shaped like a half-blown rose, and exhaled a subtle perfume like the odour of the Eastern attar.

Cushions of the same tint were heaped here and there, cabinets inlaid with mother-of-pearl glistened in the recesses of the room, and a clavichord stood in one corner, while the other was occupied by a costly harp, and two or three Moorish lutes were scattered about the room. The young earl found himself amply repaid for his endeavours to render the place agreeable when he perceived the sudden changes which passed over Maud's face, and listened to the queen's enthusiastic praise.

After having laid aside their travelling garb, and refreshed themselves by an hour's repose, a sumptuous banquet was prepared for them, and the royal guest gave a reception in the grand drawing-room.

Our readers will better understand and appreciate the preparations here made for Elizabeth of England when they recollect the high regard in which she was held, the knightly courtesy that followed her at every step, and the lavish expenditure of the Earl of Leicester and other noblemen, who had the honour of receiving her at their private residences. It is said that Sir Thomas Gresham, having erected a palace-like mansion in London, invited the queen to pay his family a visit, and when she declared that she thought

a certain door would be a great improvement, was not a little surprised and pleased, when she rose in the morning, to find that the addition had been made while she slept. The decorations of Lennox Castle had gratified her taste, and when she retired she felt far happier than she had for years.

And Maud Ruthven? That night as her young head sank upon her pillow, and slumber weighed down her heavily fringed eyelids, sweet dreams flitted through her brain, and in fancy she lived over again the meeting at the archery and the pleasant surprises which had followed in rapid succession.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

A RETURN has been made to the Stannary Council of 826 tons of the white oxide of arsenic, separated from other ores, and sold in Cornwall last year.

It is said that a chemist has extracted from coal substance chemically undistinguishable from sugar. He has named it "phenoze."

FROM the gold quartz which was mined from the Welsh hills in the neighbourhood of Dolgelly, in 1864, 2,386 ounces of gold were obtained, and in 1862, 5,299 ounces.

FROM three to four grains of theine is a healthy amount for a day, so that three ounces of really good tea are more than an ordinary person should take in a week.

An ounce of good tea contains about ten grains of theine, an amount sufficient to produce a peculiar intoxication and many unpleasant symptoms if taken in one day.

TANNIN, the astringent element in tea, is extracted by lengthened infusion, and anyone who wishes to avoid the effects of its astringency should drink tea soon after the water is poured over it.

DISCOVERY OF ANOTHER ROCK IN THE OCEAN.—Captain Lafon, of the French ship Marshal Pelissier, which arrived at Havre from Rio Janeiro, reports the discovery of a rock, not indicated in the charts, in the direct line of vessels navigating between Europe and America. It only just comes to the level of the water, and at a distance appears like a piece of wood.

BALLOON EXPERIMENT.—Mr. Lythgoe, of Cremorne Gardens, despatched from the Pomona Gardens the other evening an experimental balloon of four feet diameter, which had been ballasted with water instead of sand. This plan, it is said, makes the balloon self-discharging, and enables it, by prolonging its elevation, to travel a longer distance when weighted with sand. At nine o'clock the next morning the balloon was taken up on a plantation belonging to Lord Yarborough, about six miles from Great Grimsby.

THE ADMIRALTY AND THE PARIS EXHIBITION.—The Lords of the Admiralty have given directions for the preparation at Chatham Dockyard, for exhibition at the International Exhibition to be held in Paris next year, of models of the various descriptions of ironclad ships and other vessels forming the distinguishing type of the different classes of ships of war belonging to the royal navy. The list of vessels which are to be reproduced in half-block models includes the Monarch, Hercules, Achilles, and Lord Warden, ironclads, built or building at Chatham, together with the wooden screw two-decker line-of-battle ship Rodney, the screw steamer Blanche, the paddle-wheel steamer Salamis, and the paddle-wheel steam-yacht Elfin, tender to the Victoria and Albert. The order further directs midship-section models of the Belleroophon, Hercules, and Warrior, iron-cased ships, also to be prepared for forwarding to the Exhibition. The ships enumerated include, with one or two exceptions, specimens of the various descriptions of vessels making up the British navy.

SHEET LEAD AS A DRESSING FOR WOUNDS.—A surgeon of some eminence in his profession at Ghent has recently published an account of a method of treating wounds with dressings of sheet lead. From the first of January, 1864, to the end of May, 1866, Dr. Burggraeve has treated 236 cases in this manner, and only eight deaths have occurred. His process is exceedingly simple. It consists in washing the wound carefully with lukewarm water, and then covering it with pieces of sheet lead, which are secured with adhesive plaster. Most of the patients have been workmen injured by machinery, and were too weak to undergo operations, owing to the impoverished state of their blood. "The wound," says M. Burggraeve, "whatever may be the amount of contusion, crushing, or laceration, is first washed carefully without detaching or cutting away any portion of the flesh, since in the state of torpor it is impossible to say at once which will mortify and which may be preserved, and one runs the risk of cutting away either too much or too little. It is next surrounded with thin slips of

lead, retained in position by sticking-plaster. From time to time a jet of warm water is injected under this armour, if we may use the expression, so as to remove the ichor and refresh the parts." In order to watch the progress of the wound, each sheet of lead may be removed independently of the others. The contact of the metallic lead with the flesh causes no irritation, and the rigidity prevents friction, and excludes the air, a very important point. Besides the mechanical action of lead, Dr. Burgraves thinks that it may also be attended with some physical action, and quotes the well-known effects of Gouard's extract.

THE "BLUE MIST" UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.—Mr. E. R. Lankester has examined Mr. Glashier's cholera mist under the microscope, after collecting it on glass surfaces. In such case was shown abundance of minute granular aggregations. The granules were highly refractive, and presented all the characters of fungoid growths, being similar to the spores of the yeast plant and other moulds. During the cholera visitation of 1858, the Rev. Lord Godolphin Osborne obtained these fungus-spores from the neighbourhood of cesspools, gullyholes, &c., and termed them *aerosos*. There is no farther proof at present that they are connected with cholera.

CURING MEAT ON THE RIVER PLATE.

An interesting report on this subject, addressed to the Foreign Office, by our consul at Buenos Ayres, has just been published. Three processes for preserving the meat are given, each of which is being practically carried out on a large scale in South America. Two of the processes—Professor Morgan's and Baron Lisabig's—are already more or less well known; the third—Mr. Sloper's—is quite a recent one, and, as described, is of great interest. Mr. Morgan's process consists in making an incision in the heart just after the beast has been slaughtered, allowing all the blood to escape, and then injecting a briny fluid into the veins. An ox can be preserved by this process in ten minutes, twelve to fourteen gallons of brine being injected. Lisabig's process consists in the preparation of a concentrated extract of the meat. The flesh is reduced to a pulp in revolving iron rollers formed with spikes on the outside, and boiled in water, the liquid is then strained off, and afterwards evaporated down till nearly solid. Thus, according to the report, "eight small tins will hold the concentrated alimentary matter of an entire ox, at a price of 96s.; and will make over 1,000 basins of good strong soup, one teaspoonful to a large cup of water; and eaten either alone or with the addition of a little bread, potato, and salt, affords a good repast."

Mr. Sloper's process, for which a patent has been conceded for the whole of South America, consists simply in eliminating all oxygen from the tin in which the meat is packed. It need scarcely be said that as decay is merely a slow combination of the elements of the organic matter with the oxygen of the air, the following proceeding is all that is required to preserve the meat:—The air is expelled from the tin by means of water forced in through a hole in the bottom until they are completely filled. The water is then run off, and as it runs off it is replaced by a gas, the nature of which is said to be kept a profound secret. The two holes at top and bottom are carefully soldered down, and the meat is ready for exportation. With regard to the "secret" gas employed, it is not difficult to conjecture its nature. It is no doubt nitrogen, mixed with a small quantity of gas having a great affinity for oxygen, probably sulphurous acid or binoxide of nitrogen, so as to remove the last trace present. Sulphurous acid gas alone would dissolve in the water present, and by thus forming a vacuum, expose the vessel to the pressure of the atmosphere. Binoxide of nitrogen, being insoluble, is preferable on that account. The meat thus preserved would be exactly like common butcher's meat, and might be sold in England at 4d. or 5d. per lb. The report strangely talks of Mr. Sloper's process as based on the destruction (?) of the oxygen. All three plans are being carried out by English limited liability companies, and it is to be hoped that they will somehow utilize the enormous existing supplies of South American beef.

TEMPERATURE AT WHICH SEEDS GERMINATE.—The celebrated Swiss botanist, M. A. De Candolle, has published an account of numerous experiments upon the temperature at which seeds will germinate. We give a few of his results with respect to well-known plants, reducing the temperature to the Fahrenheit scale. The seed of common white mustard will germinate at or a little below the freezing-point. While white clover remained dormant at 41° deg., it germinated when the temperature was raised only one degree above that. Indian corn would not start at 42° deg., but germinated at a temperature very near 48° deg. Melon seeds refused to germinate at 53° deg., but did below 62°. While there is a limit of temperature below which each particular seed will not ger-

minate, there is also a limit in the other direction, and seeds fail to start when the temperature is too high the point, as in the other case, varying with the species; the greater part of some seeds of white clover did not germinate above 82½ deg. Thus seeds only germinate between certain limits of temperature, and those which can only do so within narrow limits are least able to extend themselves geographically.

LINWOOD GRANGE.

CLOSELY we huddled around the high old fireplace that cold and cheerless December night. Eagerly the bright flames shot up the spacious chimney, throwing soft, mellow light over the room, and lighting up each shadowy corner.

Fiercely the wind raved round the old brick home,stead, twisting and snapping the boughs of the aged trees, as if toying with mere saplings.

It was just the night for ghostly horrors, and our minds seemed to linger fondly upon the supernatural.

The midnight hour was close upon us, yet we made no motion to quit our cozy seats, unwilling to leave the glowing fire for our cold beds.

We were five in number, Nurse Rivers, Cousin Lizzie, Nellie, Virgie, and I. Each had her story to tell of ghostly horror and "goblins damned."

"Now, nurse, comes your turn; tell us a true story of something which happened when you were a girl," pleaded Nell, edging up to her, and laying her arm caressing around the back of the chair on which sat Nellie.

Nurse Rivers was a Scotswoman of middle age, unmarried, and had lived in our family ever since our remembrance, watching over us children with a mother's solicitude, and acting in the capacity of governess till we were old enough to be sent away to school.

Having a firm belief in the supernatural, many were the chilling tales she poured into our ears of ghostly visits, causing us to go scudding through the wide halls, after dark, as if a legion of weird spirits were upon us.

This wild December night of which I speak was the last of our stay at the old homestead, previous to our departure for school, for we were home only for the holidays.

"Yes, nurse, do tell us something to make the hair stand upright with horror," chimed in Virgie, who delighted in the horrible.

"Ah, dearies, many are the tales, and 'ever true,' that I could tell which would make the young blood curdle in your veins; but the hour is late, and you must away to bed. Have you forgot the song I taught you when you were children, 'Early to bed, early to rise'?"

"Oh, dear nurse, just one story, just one," we pleaded.

And she smiled kindly upon us and resumed her seat.

"Tell us the story connected with Linwood Grange, nurse," I coaxed, for many were the rumours concerning the strange sights and sounds to be seen and heard at midnight at Linwood—a gloomy old place within a stone's-throw of our home.

"I'm afraid it will make you more timid, my children. Even now you start and glance fearfully around if the boughs of the trees but touch the window-pane."

Eagerly we promised to guard against any feeling of timidity which might arise; and taking off her spectacles and drawing near to the fire, she began:

"I was a very young girl when I quitted, with my parents, our little cottage home in bonny Scotland. Deprived of their right, my parents were left barely sufficient to bring them to England.

"With willing hands and steady hearts they began life anew. Unable to support me in idleness, they sought and obtained for me a situation as nursery-maid in the family of your father"—turning to Nell and I. "I had not lived here long when strange rumours reached my ears concerning the neighbouring grand old house I was never tired of looking at. Many of the times that I have stood without the gates longing, yet fearing, to enter the grounds.

"Flowers bloomed here in gorgeous beauty and entrancing fragrance but to droop and die unnoticed; and it seemed to me that the birds loved best to perch on the trees of Linwood lawn, singing their merriest and sweetest songs, as if trying to drive away by their sunny presence the gloom which hung over the old mansion like a pall.

"I used to muse over the history of the place, and in my idle hours dream that it was the enchanted castle of the long ago, where slept the beauteous princess and her maids and entire household, until the coming of the victorious prince who should awaken her lady fair with the kiss of love.

"All the servants, for miles around, whispered in groups at evntide, of midnight apparitions at Lin-

wood; and young people passing the house at night would go hurrying by, casting timid glances over their shoulders as they ran.

"Filled with a restless curiosity to know the cause of these rumours, I asked the housekeeper, who had once served in the Linwood family, for the story connected with the place, and she told it to me as I am now about to tell you.

"Years ago, when Hamilton Linwood, the unfortunate hero of the story, was a young man, he met and became acquainted with a brilliant beauty, who dawned upon the people around Linwood as suddenly and radiantly as a meteor.

"She was a tall, regal-looking being, dark-eyed and ruby-lipped, and acknowledged, with ill-concealed pride, that the free, wild blood of the Gipsies flowed in her veins.

"However, no one questioned her birth or antecedents, for she was an acknowledged beauty, and graced the most select circles in the vicinity. Being a quick observer, and an ardent admirer of grace and beauty, Hamilton Linwood sought her society, and paid her the most marked attention, all of which was accepted with evident pleasure. He appeared at her side at every ball or public gathering, and society looked on and smiled; for were they not both talented, handsome, and rich?

"And yet rumour does not accuse him of avowing his love, or in any way deterring other men from her society. Thus matters stood when Linwood quitted England with a party of his gay friends, and remained away two years.

"When he returned to his home he came not as he left, alone, but brought with him a fair-haired, sunny little being whom he proudly introduced to his family as his bride. Many were the changes that now took place in the roomy old house, which had lain asleep, seemingly, for the last two years.

"Alterations were made in the furnishing of the rooms, and gay-tinted flowers decorated the whole in welcome to the young couple. Merry voices and sweet music filled every nook and dingle around the mansion for many weeks, and the scene was one of gaiety and light. As the years sped on, happiness and prosperity seemed to preside over that household. Rosy children came to bless them with their love, and sunshine filled the house.

"When Hamilton Linwood left home previous to his marriage, the beautiful Gipsy disappeared also, and had not since been heard of.

"One mellow autumn evening, while Squire Linwood—as he was now called—was riding through a piece of woodland which skirted the highway, a woman, cloaked and hooded, stepped into the path before him. Scanning her closely, and failing to recognize her, he was about to drive on, when she threw aside cloak and hood, and betrayed the faded features of the Gipsy whose beauty had once claimed his attention. He started back in surprise, and gazed long and wonderingly into her face, as if trying to recall something forgotten.

"'You know me not,' she said, sneeringly. 'The memory of the Gipsy is not so treacherous. Hast thou forgotten Zara, your Gipsy queen, as you were pleased to style her? the one whose love you sought, then cast aside, as unworthy the wife of an English gentleman?'

"A look of recognition flashed on his countenance. With a friendly smile, he extended his hand to greet her; but, disdaining it, the haughty woman stepped back and proudly surveyed him.

"This hand shall never more clasp thine in friendly greeting; but mark you well, my haughty sir, it shall work you woe. The heart of Zara was as free as the winds that sweep through the forest till you came with your winning smiles and courtly graces to fetter it in the bondage of love.'

"I sought not your love, Zara. I deemed your society entertaining, and many were the happy hours I have passed in listening to your eloquence, but I never sought to win more than your friendship."

"'Tis true you never spoke of love, yet your constant attendance upon me led me captive. Tiring of dark eyes, you sighed for other conquests, and while I was writhing in the depths of despair you were basking in the love-light of the blue eyes of your bonny bride. Prosperity has attended thy footsteps; but think not that thy sky contains naught but golden-tinted clouds, for I tell thee that dark ones shall soon sweep across the horizon of thy happiness, and sorrow and despair shall stalk by thy side ere thy sun is set. The Gipsy never forgets a wrong, and detests not to pay a vow. Remember!'

"Without waiting for reply, she disappeared amid the gloom of the woodland.

"With a heavy heart, and dim foreboding of coming trouble, Squire Linwood returned to his home, and sought to banish the gloom from his mind in the presence of his loving wife and merry children; but the words of the Gipsy rang in his ear like the knell of departed happiness.

"And yet as the days sped on, bringing with them new life and happiness to the loving ones, his brow relaxed from its gloom, and once more a kindly light shone in his eyes. He seemed to have resolved to bid defiance to the haunting fear which had fettered him so long, and was now determined to be happy, in spite of prophetess or prophecy."

"But the sable pall of sorrow was soon to trail over that household."

"The youngest of the little band of children became suddenly ill one day while playing on the lawn, and was soon writhing in convulsions. Its parents reached it only in time to catch one mute, appealing look from the blue eyes which were closing for their last sleep, then all was over. No cause could be ascertained for the attack."

"While yet the family were in gloom, another child was stricken; and before the week had passed away, the third and last child was lying pale and cold in death's grasp."

"Fear and agony now seized the squire. His precious bairns all taken from his sight, and no hand powerful enough to stay them. He shut himself in the seclusion of his room, and gave way to uncontrolled grief."

"One evening, when the dusky form of night had closed the last faint gleam of day into the gloom, a tall, dark figure arose from the corner of the room whither he had withdrawn, to be alone with his grief, and stood before him. It was Zara the Gipsy.

"She smiled scornfully upon him as he motioned her to a seat.

"Is it because of your lost treasures you weep, my dear friend?" she asked, sneeringly. "Well may you groan aloud in the anguish of your heart; but you have not known the sorrow you yet shall know. You seem surprised at my presence, but Zara the Gipsy queen loves to hover near her friends. Adieu, till we meet again."

"She disappeared as noiselessly and mysteriously as she appeared."

"Suddenly a wild conviction flashed into his mind. It was she who had taken his darlings from him. Rushing out of the room, he summoned his domestics, and caused most rigid search to be made for her, but no trace leading to her discovery could be found."

"Almost frenzied with grief, and possessed of an undying thirst for revenge, he bade farewell to his sorrowing wife—that poor young mother, who sat in the solitude of her chamber from morn till night, mourning for the little ones whose patterning feet would never again gladden her heart—and started forth on his wild errand."

"Untiringly he searched through every spot for miles around. Wherever he heard of an encampment of strollers, thither this pale, haggard man turned his steps; yet all in vain."

"After many weeks of weary wandering, he returned to his home, almost prostrated with fatigue and exertion. But what means this deathlike silence? No familiar face appeared to greet him: all was silent as the lonely churchyard, except now and then the chirping of a cricket."

"With trembling limbs he ascended the stairs and entered the chamber where he had bidden adieu to his sorrowing wife; but no loving greeting met him there. With sinking heart he strode down the broad oaken staircase, and proceeded to the servants' room; but the same fearful silence was there."

"Oh, heaven! what means this?" he exclaimed, pressing his hands to his burning temples, and staggering against the wall.

"It means that my vow is fulfilled," said a low voice beside him. "For weeks I have waited for your return from your fruitless search, that I might offer my condolence to you in your bereavement. How dainty were your precious boys that sweetmeat should sicken them unto death. Yes, Hamilton Linwood, I entered your grounds unperceived by all except your children, and, seeing a strong resemblance between them and their father, my very dear friend, sought to win their love by sweetmeats precious and rare. Strange to say, they one by one left this heartless world for a sunnier clime. And your blue-eyed, bonny bride, too, has left you to buffet alone the hardships of a cruel, uncompromising world. While you were away on your search for your Gipsy queen, I, in pity for her loneliness and sorrow, sent her often rare flowers; but, behold! their fragrance stole the love-light from the sweet blue eyes you loved better than the black ones of Zara, and stiffened her dainty limbs for their narrow bed. Your wife is lying in yonder churchyard. She died during your absence; and the domestics, terrified by the tragedies enacted in this house, fled, leaving it to ruin and decay. Therefore, I took up my abode here, awaiting your coming. I leave you now, and may you never prove so ungrateful as to forget Zara, your Gipsy queen."

"During her heartless revelation, his limbs stiffened, and he sank helpless to the floor. Lying there,

mute and rigid, his ears drank in every taunting word."

"Nothing was heard of the Gipsy until many weeks after, when the body of a woman was found near the squire's residence, wrapped in a long scarlet cloak. It was identified as Zara. How she came by her death will remain a mystery till that last day when all secrets shall be revealed."

"All through that terrible night Squire Linwood lay on the floor raving in delirium. Kindly neighbours found him there the following day, and took him away from the scene so fraught with misery. Tender care and quietude rescued him from his illness—but his reason had fled."

"For several years he lived a quiet, melancholy man, sometimes talking in loving tones to his loved ones, whom he imagined around him; but often gazing sadly out of the window, as if watching for some familiar face."

"His reason partially returned to him a few days before his death, and he told his sad history to the kind-hearted ones who soothed his troubled heart."

"Gently and uncomplainingly he passed from the world so full of misery to the shining shore where his lost ones awaited him."

"The place is fast falling to decay. No one could be induced to occupy the house after the tragedies related. The lofty rooms, which once echoed to merry voices, now resound with the hooting of owls, and but little of the splendour of Linwood remains."

"Tis said that midnight brings the shadowy form of the murderer to the house, and cries and groans resound through the corridors, and lights flash from the windows, showing the restless spirit of the Gipsy, as she flits from room to room, till the faint gleam of dawn drives her away. How true this is I cannot say; but true it is that Linwood Grange is shunned alike by man and beast."

"And now to your rest, my dearies; but not to dream of the story I have told you."

"With tender sympathy for the wretched master of Linwood, we took our lamps and hurried up the broad staircase, casting timid glances around us, not breathing freely till the bars and bolts of our rooms told us that we were safe. Nor did we draw aside the curtains to gaze upon the moonlit ruins of the Grange, as had been our want—fearing to behold the ghastly lights flashing from the windows of the haunted house."

K. C.

BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

BY E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "Sel-Made," "All Alone," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXXV

Dreams are toys;

Yet for this once, yes, superstitiously,
I will be squared by this. *Shakespeare.*

ERMINIE'S recovery was very rapid. In one week she was well enough to leave her room. And she joined the family circle at the breakfast-table.

But in the meantime no light had been thrown upon that dark mystery of the midnight visitor. Erminie had not been questioned on the subject. The doctor had obtained a promise from her friends that they would not even allude to the affair in the presence of his patient, until he should give them permission to do so; and they were waiting this permission and watching Erminie.

But Erminie "made no sign" by which they could conjecture how much, or how little was her conscious share in, or even her memory of, the events of that strange and critical night in which her illness took its favourable turn.

At length, however, an explanation seemed to be at hand. It was on the evening previous to the departure of Justin to rejoin his regiment. The brother and sister were left alone in Erminie's chamber. She was reclining on her sofa, for she was not yet very strong, and the effort of keeping up all day had tired her. He was sitting by her side fanning her. They had been enjoying each other's company in silence as only those who truly love each other can, when Erminie gently broke the silence by saying:

"Justin dear, there has been something on my mind to tell you for several days. I have hitherto shrunk from telling you; but to-night I must speak, for to-morrow you leave me."

"Speak freely then, my dear sister; speak fearlessly; and feel sure that I am prepared to hear, in love and trust, all that you have to say," replied Justin, fully believing that she was about to explain the mystery of that memorable midnight visit.

Erminie looked up suddenly and in surprise.

"What does that look mean?" he inquired.

"I do not think that you are prepared to hear what I have to say, since you cannot possibly know or guess its nature, for I have not spoken of it, or hinted at it, to any living creature," she answered.

"Then I am the more desirous of hearing it now, my dear Erminie."

"But you are so practical, so matter-of-fact, Justin; and the story I have to tell you is so strange, mysterious, and supernatural, that, for the first time in my life, I shrink from giving you my confidence."

"You need not fear to confide in me, my dear sister. Surely you must be aware that I know there are mysteries of nature, mysteries of spirit that utterly baffle our powers of investigation; mysteries, in fact, which our knowledge cannot fathom, or our reason explain," said Justin, solemnly.

"Just such a mystery was my strange experience of one night during my illness," gravely replied Erminie.

"It was the last night of your illness—the night on which your malady took its convalescent turn, was it not?"

"Yes; how did you guess that?" inquired Erminie, in surprise, as she remembered too that Justin had told her he was prepared to hear her revelation.

"How did you know that?" she repeated, seeing that he did not immediately answer.

"You lay in a trance-coma all that night—a state in which the subject often 'dreams dreams and sees visions,'" answered Justin, evasively.

But Erminie did not detect the evasion. She was satisfied with the explanation, and even endorsed it by adding:

"Yes, I can well understand that I was, or appeared to be, in a trance-coma. I do not say either that there may not have been natural causes for all that seemed supernatural to me. Perhaps the long fastings, free bleedings, strong druggings, and other exhausting treatment to which it seems I had been subjected, may have so reduced my body as to leave me exposed to all manner of illusions, imaginings, and hallucinations; or they may have so loosened 'the silver cord' that binds body and soul together as to set the finer portion of the soul—the pure spirit—free to leave its earthly tenement and travel at will, as mine seems to have done."

"Erminie, you are not surely lending yourself to all this modern madness of mesmerism, clairvoyance, spiritualism, and all that?"

"No," said Erminie, smiling, "I am about to profess no faith in any of those theories of which, indeed, I know nothing, and care to know nothing, since I find in the Christian Revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures light enough to guide me on my way through earth to heaven. But I am about to tell you certain experiences of my own, inexplicable to me, let who else will explain them away."

"Go on then, my dear. I was wrong to interrupt you. I will not do so again," said Justin, soothingly.

Thus encouraged, Erminie began her marvellous story.

"I must begin with the last exhausting bleeding, and drugging to which I was subjected. It was, I suppose, at the climax of my fever and delirium that the lancet was applied. For when I came to myself, the blood was fast flowing from an opening in the vein of my right arm, and the horrible agony in my head seemed to be flowing away with it. So ineffable was the sense of relief from torture, that I was happy to feel myself fainting, and, as it were, dying and passing away in that delicious swoon. But that was not to be. Soon I felt my arm bandaged, and I felt myself raised up by somebody, while somebody else put something to my lips, which I swallowed, and which diffused a still deeper and sweeter sense of benign repose throughout my system. And then they laid me down in a sort of heavenly half-dream. The hours passed as visions. Friends came and went as shadows. I knew Elsie watched me, Dr. Sales prayed by me, Britomarte came and wept over me, you came and wrung your hands and groaned. I knew all this, and yet I was unable and unwilling to move or murmur. My will, as well as my power, was held in bondage by a sweet spell of heavenly peace."

"You were passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, dear sister, though you knew it not, and though you crossed it only to climb up loftier heights of new life."

"Yes, perhaps so."

"I know it; but proceed."

"After that sweet season of conscious repose, there came a period of unconsciousness, from which, as it appeared to me, I awoke. Now comes the mystery. Without any summons, without any motive, but by an irresistible impulse, I slipped out of my body, as easily as ever I slipped out of my clothes. Retaining my full shape and personality, even to my flowing white garments, with which I seemed instantly to have clothed myself as by will from the elements around. I hovered for a moment over the bed and gazed with curiosity on the body or shell that lay there. We were exactly alike, even to the smallest detail of form, feature and dress. When I had looked at my empty

shell, and wondered within my real self a little, I turned with curiosity to my watcher. She was fast asleep in her easy-chair. But as I looked at her, she woke up with a start, and looked at my shell on the bed, and muttered, "No change! no change!" in such a distressed tone that I tried to make her console that I was alive, and that there was no such thing as death. But I could make no impression on her whatever. I might as well have spoken to a stone-deaf woman, or appeared before a stone-blind one. And I felt discouraged, for I knew that I could hold no communication with Elsie except through my body or shell."

"What a singular dream," murmured Justin, meditatively.

"Do you really think it was a dream? Well, perhaps it was. I cannot classify it. I can only relate it. Then it appeared to me that I arose upon the air by placing my feet together and folding my arms upon my breast, throwing my chest forward, and raising my head; and very much as a swimmer floats upon the water, I floated on the air. As easily as you pass through shadows I passed through substances that were only shadows to me. I passed through each floor and ceiling, and finally through the roof of the house, out into the open air; and I rose so high that the houses in the city seemed a mere collection of mosaics, and the streets looked like strips of tape. And everything seemed small, but the vast empyrean."

Here Erminie paused and seemed to reflect, and to endeavour to collect her thoughts.

"Go on, my dear," said Justin; "your dream is very interesting, and all the more for being so very strange."

"It is extremely difficult, dear Justin, to make you understand what I experienced, even in my manner of locomotion. Let me see if I can describe it. I had no wings, as spirits are supposed to have; I had only limbs and members corresponding exactly to those of my shell. So I did not fly like a bird or swim like a fish, though the motion was more like swimming than flying. I moved by an effort of the will that set in motion a force within my chest, that corresponds to a wheel. If the effort was gentle, I went slowly; if energetic, I went swiftly, but never with any sense of weariness. I lay at ease upon the air, which bore me up, while the wheel within me always bore me onwards at my will. So with my head raised, my arms folded at rest upon my breast, and my form supported by the elastic air, and my feet extended, but close together, I floated over the city and out into the open country. Do I make that clear?"

"Clear as such a dream can be made, I suppose, dear."

"Well, in this way I passed along the suburbs, and so out into the country, where all was dark. I was as one drawn on by an unknown influence, or led by an unseen hand. I passed over land and water. I saw the late trains thundering on their dark way amidst fire and smoke. I saw the steamers puffing and blowing on the clouded rivers. I passed over large cities and small villages. I noted the mad orgies in the first and the calm repose in the last. I passed over fields and woods. And, oh! I passed over some places that reminded me of the scenes in Dante's Inferno!—over whole ruined woods cut down and burned away, until there was nothing left but a charred and blackened plain. But, Justin, are you listening to me?"

"With the deepest interest, my dear."

"Well, so over all these varied scenes I passed on through desolate land. I saw—oh, Justin! there is no scene in Dante's Inferno that can equal in horror what I saw! I passed into a large stone building, which I knew was a prison, and through that prison into a room—Justin," she cried, believing her brother was growing weary of her narrative, "are you asleep?"

"No, no, dear one," he replied, arousing himself, "I am attending with the deepest interest."

"But you seem weary or sleepy."

"It is because my attention is so absorbed. Go on, dear child."

"Listen—oh, listen! I entered that room, and saw sitting on the side of a poor, narrow prison bed a worn, woeful old man. Justin, that man was our father!"

"Erminie!"

"Justin! dream, vision, clairvoyance—call my experience what you will—but that man was our father! I felt so overjoyed to see him living, though even in a prison, that I darted to him, threw my arms around him, kissed him, embraced him, called upon his name, and showered upon him caresses and fond words. Oh, heaven! I could make no impression upon him whatever. No more than I could make upon Elsie. I beat the air around him. But at this he only seemed to wonder where the pleasant breeze could come from."

"At last I thought I might have impressed him slightly, not with the sense of my real presence, which

he never once suspected. But with the memory of my existence, far off in time and place; for he began to talk of me and weep—all in soliloquy, like a man long used to solitude. He said:

"My poor Erminie! my poor, poor girl! It is well for you that you believe your father to have fallen, bravely leading his men to the charge on that fatal field! You have shed all your tears over him now; and you have found consolation in religion, and pleasure in the performance of your duties; and the idea of your father has sunk into a proud and tender memory. Ah, me! how long is this to last?"

"And here my father wept and sobbed. And I, overcome with pity and sorrow, embraced him, and kissed him, and called him by every tender epithet; but, oh! I could make no manner of impression on him beyond recalling myself to his memory, and then only, as far off at home in the parlour; for as he wept, and sobbed, and wrung his hands, he continually muttered:

"My poor girl! how you used to love me! If you did not know!"

"And then I tried with all the force of my spirit to impress him, but always in vain. And then I knew that without my shell I could not in any way communicate with him; and so great became my terror and anguish, and so intense my longing for my body, that all in an instant I clove through space, and flashed back into my body, with which my spirit united as a flame with quick fuel. And I found myself lying on my bed in this room; nay, even heard the clock strike one!"

"And that is all!" said Justin, gravely.

"That is all, except that I am convinced my father lives!"

"Alas, Erminie, your vision was but an opium dream!"

"I do not think so! Time will show! No, that was no dream, Justin! What immediately followed was a dream, if you please; for it took place in this room, and it was even more extraordinary than anything I have yet told you," said Erminie, gravely.

"Tell it me then, Erminie," said Justin, feeling sure now, by the very hour she had designated, "one o'clock," that she was about to speak of that mysterious midnight visitor whose appearance had so perplexed the whole household.

"I am willing that you should consider this as a dream; since even I cannot contemplate it as a reality!"

"Speak on, dear child," said Justin.

"Well, as the clock struck 'one,' and I must have heard it in my sleep, I thought I saw standing by my bed my once betrothed, General Eastworth. He was looking down upon me with a pale face, haggard, and agonized by grief, remorse, and compassion. He was speaking to me in a voice shaken with emotion, in words bitterly self-accusative, intensely remorseful.

"No, Justin—dear, only brother—not even to you can I repeat those words, sacred as the utterances of one who speaks to a priest in the confessional. But I thought I arose and laid my hands upon his head and prayed for him; and he vanished from my sight, and the dream was over. Yet, ah! how much like reality it seemed! If I did not know that the event was impossible, I should believe it to be real."

Justin did not at once reply. He took time to reflect. He was more than ever inclined to the opinion that the report of General Eastworth's death was a false one.

But should he tell Erminie this? Should he agitate her in her present weak condition by the information that the secret visit of her lover, which she, in her then abnormal state, took to be a dream, was indeed a fact?

No! Justin decided to leave her faith as it was, and to warn Elsie and all others to do the same.

"I thank you for these confidences, my sweet sister," he said. "When your body and mind have both recovered their perfect tone, you will look upon all your experiences of that critical night as dreams—strange dreams—superinduced by the effect of opium upon a very reduced system."

Erminie smiled approvingly, and the subject was dropped.

But the conversation did not end there. It only turned to other topics.

At Erminie's request, Justin rang the bell, and when a servant appeared in answer to it, she ordered several portmanteaux which had been packed for her brother to be brought to her, that she might make a last inspection to see that they were all right.

When they were ranged before her, three in number, and unlocked and examined, she said:

"I have put up a great quantity of under-clothing, and socks and pocket-handkerchiefs, because I think they are the real necessities. I shouldn't care much if your coat was out at elbows, so that you had plenty of under-garments," said Erminie.

"But, my dear sister, here are much more than enough," laughed Justin.

"Much more than enough! is just what you ought to take with you. It will be a long time before you can come home to me again to be fitted out properly," said Erminie.

"And now, my sweet child, it is ten o'clock. You ought to have been in bed an hour ago. And, though this is our last evening, I must bid you good-night, love," said Justin, fondly embracing and kissing his sister.

Erminie returned his caresses, and promised to meet him at his early breakfast.

And so they separated for the night. And the next morning Justin said good-bye to his friends, and set out to join his regiment.

(To be continued.)

FACETIA.

A GENTLEMAN, who was a few days since rescued from drowning in the river Cen, declared that the accident would be an advantage to him hereafter, as he should be able to say that he had been brought up at Cambridge.

A TEACHER at a national school recently asked a boy which was the highest dignitary of the church. After looking up and down, north, east, south, and west, the boy innocently replied, "The weather-vane."

A "TALL" STORY.—An old gentleman from the country stopped recently at one of the highest hotels in London, and wrote home that his room was six stories high, and his bill was three stories higher than his room.

"Excuse me, madam, but I would like to know why you look at me so savagely?" said a gentleman to a lady stranger. "Oh! I beg pardon, sir; I took you for my husband," was the reply.

"TAKE HIM FOR ALL IN ALL."

I've a friend—well, perhaps not exactly a friend, But we'll call him a friend, don't you see? There are some of his acts that I cannot defend; But on this all who know him agree:

He may not be clever, he may not be rich, Kind, affable, generous, gay; Still, though not of a high intellectual pitch, He's a good sort of man in his way.

Now a good sort of man is the man I respect, And my friend—yes, we'll give him that name—(Though I don't hold with all that he says, recollect, Or assert that he's never to blame)—

Is a man you might look for all over the town, And not see his like in a day; For I state my conviction that—well, yes—that Brown

Is a good sort of man in his way.

"Discreet?" Well, you know, if you come to "discreet,"

Why discretion's not much in his line; It's not to be found in all people you meet, And it may be no virtue of mine.

I don't say it's not, and I don't say it is; But this I do certainly say,

That whatever Brown's failings—and failings are his—

He's a good sort of man in his way.

Eh! What? You surprise me! No! Surely you can't

Mean that Smith said that Brown said that I Said, one day in the hearing of Brown's rich old aunt,

That Brown's reputation was shy.

No; what I did say—though my memory's faint—Or what I intended to say,

Was that Brown, though no sage, and still less of a saint,

Was a good sort of man in his way. Fin.

CONSEQUENCE OF A LONG COURTSHIP.—"John, how does it happen that you who tried so hard for your wife through a long and hopeless courtship of four years, now that you have won the prize, seem to care so little about her?" "Why, sir, I'll tell you. I've heard of a man who wanted to jump over a stone wall. He took a good start, and ran a mile, and when he got up to the wall he was so tired that he had to lie down and go to sleep by the side of it. Now I loved my wife so hard and so long before I could get her that I found my love had all run out when I had her fast."

Two English gentlemen lately took their tickets from Madrid to Paris, paying—to the frontier—£3 each. They travelled in the "berline," or coupé, in which there are four places. At a station half-way between Madrid and the French frontier comes a man in a tight uniform and a cocked hat. "There are only two of you," says Cocked-hat, "and there are four places, so you must pay for the other two." "Go

to Burgos,"—that is Spanish for blazes—says Englishman; "I have paid and will pay no more." "Very well," says official, "then we shall leave your luggage here." They absolutely sent for files of National Guards to turn the Englishmen out of their carriage. Remonstrance was vain, for they saw their luggage being piled on the platform. What could they do? What they did—pay twice their fare. But it is well that travellers from Madrid should know this little detail. No doubt the Englishmen wanted to keep their snugger to themselves, and were practising those little arts with which we are familiar on English railroads to exclude passengers when there is plenty of room, and the Spaniards in their simplicity took the diplomacy to mean places paid for. English travellers are not always in the right, though to listen to their complaints such should be the fact.

FIGHTING A BEAR WITH A SODA-BOTTLE.

The relator was out bear-shooting one day, and had been engaged in following one he had wounded. His people, however, lost the track, and while they were searching, for it, or trying to find out something certain regarding the beast's line of retreat, he determined to rest under a tree, and have a sandwich and a glass of brandy and soda-water. He was rather a luxurious sort of fellow, and generally had a bottle or two of soda-water with him cooling in wet cloths.

He got hold of his pewter and poured out a little brandy into it, and revelled in the anticipation of the cold, grateful, effervescent drink, and you know how delicious and reviving it is during a hot day's work. Seated with his pewter mug between his legs, after carefully untwisting the wires that bound the cork, he was gently easing the cork itself out, so as not to lose a drop of the precious liquid.

With great care, and with a mouth watering for the drink, he was eyeing the upward progress of the cork, when he was startled with the growling—ough—ough—of an angry bear. He was a short, fat fellow, and by no means active, so I should not be correct in saying he "jumped up," for that with him was an impossibility—but he started, and looked up; and there bearing down on him along the jungle path, was his wounded friend, and not more than four or five yards off. He was perfectly aghast; he had no time to bolt, or even to seize his gun, which was resting against another tree; so in the desperation of the moment he raised his bottle to hit the bear over the head or nose, for he remembered their peculiar sensitiveness in that prominent feature. At that very moment the cork flew out with a sharp bang, hit brain, as luck would have it, on the nose itself, and the contents of the bottle, being well up, flew fizzing and sputtering over his face and eyes. This was a reception he had not calculated on. Instead of seizing his victim, he hastily turned aside in terror, and made the best of his way into the jungle.

THE RIGHT MAN.—The late Sir Henry Smith, long M.P. for Colchester, was one of the Tories of the old school; and among the advocates of reform his resolute opposition to all change gave him a reputation for folly and obstinacy which was not borne out by his real character. On one occasion he was canvassing in presence of numerous friends, and on asking a heavy-looking farmer for his vote, the man replied, "I'd vote for ye Sir Henry, as usual, only you're such a fool." "Fool, am I?" retorted Sir Henry; "then I'm the very man to represent you." This shaft of wit penetrated the farmer's scone, and with a loud guffaw he promised his vote.

A TAME OYSTER.—Lord Frederick Fitz Clarence was once dining with a party of officers, in their mess-room, at Portsmouth, when one of them began telling some rather heavy stories of his exploits with animals, relating the performances which he had taught a young leopard, a tame snake, and other animals; in fact, if this gentleman's account of himself was to be believed, Rarey was nowhere when compared to him. Lord Frederick listened to his various stories for some time with the greatest attention, and when he had finished, said, "What you say, captain, is very true, I've no doubt; any animal, however low in the scale of nature, may be instructed by a kind master, and will become attached to him; I myself once had a tame oyster, who used to follow me up and down stairs."

THE TALK OF MEN AND WOMEN.—Somebody of a statistical turn of mind, who evidently has but little to do, publishes some curious statistics of the average talk of men and women. He has discovered that an ordinary middle-aged man spends three hours per day in conversation, calculating at the rate of one hundred words per minute, or twenty-nine octavo pages per hour, which would amount to six hundred pages per week, or fifty-two big volumes per year. Having ascertained these facts as regards the masculine portion of the human race, the statistician applied his best energies to ascertain the amount of words

uttered by an ordinary and middle-aged female per minute, and the amount of time spent on the average by that sex in general conversation. After the most patient investigation and abstruse calculation, this able arithmetician was compelled to give up the question and confess the magnitude of the figures produced even at the outset of the inquiry baffled all human calculation.

WHAT riches are those that certainly make themselves wings and fly away?—*Ost-riches.*—*Fun.*

THE ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH'S FIRST BABY.

We read in the *Times* of the 16th August, that on the 11th August there was born, at New York, a son unto Alexander Barret, Esq., of Lancaster Gate, London.

York and Lancaster baby, how proud you must be,
And what a remarkable baby you are!

Alexander of Greece would have cried to foresee
Time and space conquered thus by his namesake,
your Par.

Punch drinks to the health of the Infantino Barret,
Fa, ma, mire, and household, from kitchen to garret.
JUDY.

BEAT THAT.—We know a man so clever with his
lathes that he can even turn a deaf ear.—*Punch.*

"It is remarkable," says a critic, "that Blind Tom, whose sole idea is music, is an idiot." Why remarkable? That critic does not go among musical people.—*Punch.*

CONUNDRUM FOR CONVOCATION.—A reverend gentleman, the Canon of a Cathedral, had his pocket picked. Why was this Canon like an Armstrong Gun?—Of course, because he was rifled.—*Punch.*

WEIGHING THE BABY.

"How many pounds does the baby weigh,
Baby, who came but a month ago?
How many pounds from the crowning curl
To the rosy point of the restless toe?"

Grandfather ties the kerchief's knot,
Tenderly guides the swinging weight,
And carefully over his glasses peers
To read the record, "Only eight."

Softly the echo goes around,
The father laughs at the tiny girl;
The fair young mother sings the words,
While grandmother smooths the golden curl.

And stooping above the precious thing,
Nestles a kiss within a prayer;
Murmuring softly, "Little one,
Grandfather did not weigh you fair."

Nobody weighed the baby's smile,
Or the love that came from the helpless one:
Nobody weighed the threads of care
From which a woman's life is spun.

No index tells the mighty worth
Of a little baby's quiet breath,
A soft, unceasing metronome,
Patient and faithful unto death.

Nobody weighed the baby's soul,
For here, on earth, no weights there be
That could avail. God only knows
Its value in eternity.

Only eight pounds to hold a soul
That seeks no angel's silver wing,
But shrines it in this human guise
Within so fair and small a thing.

Oh, mother, laugh your merry note,
Be gay and glad, but don't forget
From baby's eyes looks out a soul
That claims a home in Eden yet.

E. L.

G E M S .

ONE might as well be out of the world as to be
beloved by nobody in it.

You should forgive many things in others but
nothing in yourself.

WISE men are instructed by reason; men of less
understanding by experience; the most ignorant by
necessity; the beasts by nature.

HOPE.—A mistress whom we still love and still
believe, though she has often deceived us, because we
cannot be happy without her.

SUCH as hear disobliging discourse, and repeat it
again to the persons concerned, are much mistaken
if they think to oblige them by such indiscreet
confidence.

WHEN a person speaks coarsely, he has dressed himself
clean to no purpose. The clothing of our minds is
certainly to be regarded before that of our bodies.
To betray in a man's talk a corrupt imagination is a

much greater offence against the conversation of gentlemen than any negligence of dress imaginable.

OUR THOUGHTS.

They fit, they come, they go,
The visions of the day;
They change, they fade, they glow,
They rise, they die away.
And all within the scope
Of one poor human breast,
Where joy, and fear, and hope,
Can never be at rest.

BID that welcome which comes to punish us, and
we punish it, seeming to bear it lightly.

MANY who would not for the world utter a falsehood
are yet eternally scheming to produce false impressions
on the minds of others, respecting facts
characters, and opinions.

WE are to relieve the distressed, to put the wan-
derer into his way, and to divide our bread with the
hungry, which is but the doing of good to ourselves,
for we are only members of one great body.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO PRESERVE GRAPES.—Take a cask or barrel
inaccessible to the external air, and put into it a layer
of bran dried in an oven, or of ashes well dried and
sifted. Upon this place a layer of grapes, well
cleaned, and gathered in the afternoon of a dry day,
before they are perfectly ripe. Proceed thus with alter-
nate layers of bran and grapes till the barrel is full,
taking care that the grapes do not touch each
other; let the last layer be of bran; then close the
barrel so that the air may not be able to penetrate,
which is an essential point. Grapes thus packed will
keep nine, or even twelve months. To restore them
to their freshness, cut the end of the stock of each
bunch of grapes, and put that of white grapes into white
wine, and that of black grapes into red wine,
as you would put flowers into water to revive or
keep them fresh.

MISCELLANEOUS.

At the recent vacation at Eton there were in the
College—one marquis, seven earls, nineteen lords,
thirty honourables, and three baronets.

The marriage of the Princess Dagmar of Denmark
with the Czarovich will take place in November at St.
Petersburg.

IT is generally supposed that an Act of Parliament
was passed last year to enable cab-drivers to charge 1s.
for the first mile. There is no such law in force, as
the bill on the subject was withdrawn.

RATHER a mystifying despatch was received from
New York lately, dated Friday, eleven o'clock at
night:—"Your despatch of Saturday morning, six
o'clock, has just been received. It will be attended to.
We are going to bed. Good night."

LORD DERBY.—who has not been in office many
weeks, has had the nominations to four Judicatories, a
Bishopric, two Garter, and two Lord-Lieutenancies,
while he has created six Peers, three Baronets, one
Knight, and a dozen Privy Councillors.

BOTH the Louvre and the Hôtel de Ville have been
emptying their cellars with the hope of finding some
valuables, and in both places, sure enough, wonderful
collections of old paintings have been exhumed,
among others a valuable Paul Delaroche.

A RUMOUR is now current at Berlin that Bismarck
will be made a prince and named Grand Chancellor of
the kingdom, a dignity which hitherto in Prussia has
only been conferred on two persons—first, on the
Prince of Hardenberg, and afterwards on M. de
Beyme, Minister of Justice, and reorganizer of the
judicial system in the monarchy.

THE balance in the Exchequer at the end of the
year 1866 was nearly £2,000,000 below that of the
preceding year—£7,691,000—£5,851,000. It
was the lowest balance recorded since 1856. The
Chancellor of the Exchequer was only following the
fashion of the time, in distrusting the banker and
keeping a low balance.

The following is a reliable description of a "boy"
who was being exhibited in the Town Hall, Water-
ford. He was born at Belmullet, county Mayo, on
November 7, 1849. He is at present thirty-two stone
weight; he measures across the shoulders one yard
and two inches; thirty-seven inches round the waist;
thirty inches round the calf of the leg; twenty-two
inches round the muscle of the arm; and above one
yard round the thigh. Notwithstanding his immense
proportions, his appearance is most prepossessing, his
features being soft and expressive.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ELEONORE.—See our answer to "William" in No. 173.

JULIE.—"An Adventure in France" is not suitable for our column, nor indeed for print at all.

A. G., a professional man, thirty-seven, with 200*l.* a year, is in search of a widow of respectability and education, and not above thirty-five.

HERMANN OLFHAMPTON.—Mr. Pitt was not only Premier ("First Lord of the Treasury"), but Chancellor of the Exchequer also.

W. C. S.—1. Your writing is very good. 2. Apply to one of the non-commissioned officers of the recruiting staff of your district.

HATTY, nineteen, and rather dark. Respondent must be fair. "Hatty" has no money, but is very becoming in dress. A tradesman preferred.

N. Y. V.—"Marschonna means literally 'froth of the sea.' It is not a chemical preparation, but a natural product, being a clay found chiefly on the sea-shore of the Crimea."

EMMET, nineteen, dark hair, eyes, and moustaches. The young lady must be pretty and lively, with golden hair and blue eyes.

BOTANET.—Pistil is that portion of plants by means of which they are propagated; it consists of three divisions, the germen (containing the seed), style, and stigma.

CHARLES M., a French gentleman, twenty-four, fair, well educated, fond of home, would like to meet a young lady nice looking, domes-scaled, and ladylike.

NELLY, eighteen, dark, and thoroughly domesticated.

"Lotty," nineteen, blue eyes, fair, and brown hair. "Lotty" would like a dark and "Nelly" a fair respondent.

EDITH AND ETHEL.—"Edith" is eighteen, good figure, medium height, fair, dark eyes, and a lively disposition. "Ethel" is eighteen, tall, dark, with dark blue eyes.

TENANT.—If a landlord gives a receipt for the last quarter's rent due of a long term, it is presumed in law that all the rest is likewise paid, though the tenant should not be able to produce receipts.

YOUNG SAXON, twenty-five, tall, fair, and handsome, with a small and beautifully situated farm and 200*l.* a year. Respondent must be about his own age, and with a knowledge of music.

A LOVER OF COINS.—Florins were first made by the Florentines. The German florin is worth 2*s.* 4*d.*; that of Spain, 4*s.* 4*d.*; of Palermo and Sicily, 2*s.* 6*d.*; and of Holland, 2*s.*

EMMAINE, twenty-one, 5 ft 4 in. in height, a brunet, a first-class singer and pianiste, and can cook and clean with any person. Respondent must be dark, from twenty-six to thirty, steady, and a Churchman.

NICHOLAS, whose name, by the way, is the only word we can make out in his letter, must really write to us in legible characters. It is not fair to expect us to decipher hieroglyphics.

C. B. S.—Call by all means. An "engagement" is not like a marriage advertised among your friends by means of the newspaper and the cards sent. How, therefore, are they otherwise to know you are engaged?"

INQUIRER.—To make red ink: Procure 4 oz. of green Brazil wood, 1 pint of diluted acetic acid, 1/2 oz. of alum; the above ingredients should boil slowly in an enamel vessel for one hour, then strain, and add 1 oz. of gum arabic.

A. NORSEMAN, twenty-six, auburn hair and moustache, dark brown eyes, fresh coloured, very temperate, and with a love for music and painting. Respondent must be good looking, good education and address, and also able to give him good advice when necessary.

NATURALIST.—To preserve gold fish: Fresh river water should be given to them every day; for food, small worms, with a little lean pork finely powdered. Sudden and loud noises, strong scents, and agitation of the water are highly injurious.

NANNY will respond to any well-principled, affectionate gentleman of respectable position, and not under thirty, who has discovered "that it is not good for man to be alone." She is twenty-nine, medium height, and dark hair and eyes, is a teacher, and has saved a trifle.

TOSY and LOTTY, two cousins. "Tosy" is twenty-two, 5 ft 6 in. in height, dark, and good looking. "Lotty" is twenty-one, 5 ft 4 in. in height, dark brown hair, blue eyes. Neither has money, but they would make respectable mechanics good wives.

A. WOULD-BE SOLDIER.—1. An ensign's commission in Her Majesty's Army is (regulation price) 45*s.*, but you would have to pass an examination before being gazetted. To query 2, 3, and 4, apply to any of the recruiting staff, Charles Street, Westminster, or at the head-quarters of the military quartered in your district—say Weedon. 2. Hart's Army List, which any bookseller would obtain for you for a

few shillings. "A Would-be Soldier," however, without he has a private fortune and considerable interest, had better seek a more profitable means of investing his money than purchasing a commission, for no officer can live even decently upon his pay. Without a private fortune you would grow sick of your sword within twelve months, and be glad to turn it into a reaping-hook, or be compelled to sell out, after which the chances are that you would be spoiled for any civil occupation—in fact, socially, "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring."

A. PALLING.—The place you mention is in South America, situated on the Rio de la Plata, or River Plate. You could reach it old New York. Apply to any American shipping agent—choose one from the advertising columns of the daily papers.

LUCILLE VIOLET, seventeen, petite, rather inclined to embonpoint, fair (detesting the abominable *chiognons*), dark blue eyes, rosy laughing mouth, happy disposition, surnamed "Tipperarykick" from being such a mite, and passionately fond of music and poetry. A tall dark gentleman preferred.

PAT MOLLER, twenty-five, with a good house in the suburbs of Dublin. The lady must be of respectable parents, educated, of gentle disposition, and with a little money to help him on respectably through life. "Pat" is tall, fair, auburn hair, whiskers, moustache, and good looking.

RICARDO, twenty-four, 5 ft 10 in. in height. Respondent must be about nineteen. "Ricardo" is very steady, fond of home, and religious. The lady must possess similar qualities, be tall, dark, and ladylike, and willing to wait until he is in a position to marry comfortably.

TOUNIE.—Archaeon, the new French watering-place, which it is supposed will vie with Biarritz, and at which was recently held the great Fish and Agricultural Exhibition, so admirably described by the correspondent of the Standard, is built in the sand hills among the pines, about 400 miles south of Paris and 400 to the north of Madrid.

FELIX.—Halcyon was anciently the name given to the seven days previous and subsequent to the winter solstice; at this season a sea-bird bearing the above name, invited by the calmness of the weather, laid its eggs in nests built on the rocks. This word also denotes times of peace and plenty.

MEMORIES OF HAPPY DAYS.

Sweet memories of happy days.
Of blissful childhood's cheerful years,
By night or day, fair visions raise
And banish all life's doubts and fears;
A struggling barge upon life's sea,
Will hail the beacon on the shore—
Thus memory's rays are dear to me,
And bid me sorrow never more.

Sweet memories of happy days.
Come o'er me as I sadly roam,
Where fall no kindly, cheerful rays,
Afar from friends—afar from home;
They bring to me a pleasure far
Above all joys on life's drear plain,
And, pointing to hope's guiding star—
They bid me rise and strive again.

D. S.

AN UNDERGRAD., fair, light whiskers and moustache, 5 ft 9 in. in height, good looking, highly spoken of in his college, and with first-rate prospects in the church. The lady must be of good family, good looking, fine figure, proficient in music, and possessing a fair acquaintance with literature.

LAURA WINSTY.—1. Being of full legal age you can marry without the consent of your mother or guardians. 2. If the case be exactly as you state it, no person can keep from you the money left under your father's will. Take heed, however; even after twenty-one, it is a serious matter to marry in defiance of the wish of your only remaining parent.

LIZZIE C. is quite correct. We cannot, from her own confession, praise her "maidenly reserve," as she terms it. Your young man is jealous, and with cause. We fear, "Lizzie," you are a coquette. How, "Lizzie," would you like to see your young man walking out with half-a-dozen different young women? Think of it, and remember that coquetry always come to grief.

HOUSEWIFE.—To give the beautiful gloss noticeable on new linen: Take 2 oz. of white gum-arabic powder, pour on it rather more than a pint of boiling water, let it remain covered all night, then strain it carefully into a bottle, cork well, and put aside for use; a tablespoonful stirred into a pint of ordinary starch will impart a look of newness to all linens, muslin, &c.

JONATHAN.—Leap-year, or Biassettile, is every fourth year, and so called from its *leaping* a day more than year that in the common year, so that the common year has 365 days, but the leap-year 366; and then February has 29 days, which in common years has but 28. An old writer says: "To find leap-year you have this rule—

"Divide by 4, what's left shall be
For leap-year, 0; for past, 1, 2, 3."

ADELAIDE.—Lord Chelmsford, the present Lord High Chancellor of England, was born in 1794, and served as a midshipman under Lord Gambier at the battle of Copenhagen. His lordship was called to the bar in 1818. He was first appointed Attorney-General when Sir Frederick Thesiger, in 1845, and Lord Chelmsford, with the title of Baron Chelmsford, in 1858.

A. POOR BOY.—You cannot obtain a situation in the Excise without interest, say, that of a member of Parliament; nor in a bank without that of a director or chief. "A Poor Boy" should carefully watch the advertisements in the daily papers, and apply for and take the first thing that offers. A lad of seventeen who is friendless and penniless in this great city of London must be weak indeed (being decently educated) if he cannot get his living. Persevere, my lad, rely upon yourself, don't trust to friends. There is an old Latin motto, which translated reads "Perseverance overcomes all difficulties."

B. A. asks us in what form she should send a lock of her hair to her intended, whether the favoured swain should wear it, and in what shape a return lock should be sent? 1 and 2. In a ring, or any other ornament suitable for a gentleman, who would be a *rara avis* indeed if he not prize it as his life, or let it hang him either by night or by day. 3. Were we sending a return lock to the lady of our love, we

should get our jeweller to enclose it in a heart-shaped locket, with the counterpart presentment of ourselves upon the obverse; but *choose à son goût*, charming "B. A." Doubtless, providing your lover takes this hint, you will reward him by wearing it near your heart of hearts.

JULIAN ST. GEORGE is in search of a young lady (if he can find one likely to suit him). His *beau-ideal* is—a small forte, not particular as to good looks, a good disposition, efficiency in music, and nineteen summers; he would like her to belong to Liverpool. "Julian St. George" is twenty, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, is in a lucrative business on his own account, good looking, and manly for his age, neither light nor dark.

A. READER FROM THE BEGINNING.—1. You have been misinformed. There is no Earl of Belamere in the peerage. Mr. Chichester Fortescue's elder brother Thomas, M.P. for Louth from 1840 to 1841, was created in 1852 an *Irish* peer by the title of Lord Clermont, and to which title the Right Hon. C. Fortescue is heir presumptive. 2. Lord Clermont is not a peer of the realm, neither had his lordship a title previously to 1852.

JONATHAN.—1. The present, or rather the *Ex-King* of Hanover is the Queen's first cousin, a prince of the English blood royal and a peer of the realm, being Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale, and Earl of Armagh, and had Her Majesty died without issue, would assuredly have been George the Fifth of England. His Majesty was the only child of the late King of Hanover and Duke of Cumberland. 2. You are right. His Majesty is stone blind, and has three children—viz., Prince Ernest, and two princesses.

LITTLE OWL, twenty-four, brown hair, grey eyes, under the medium height, good figure, and pretty can play well and sing little. "Little One" adds that she can have any number of admirers, but none that she would marry, as none of them are old enough. Respondent must be tall, dark, rather stout, with handsome teeth, and white hands, not under thirty-five or over fifty, and his income not less than 200*l.* per annum. He must not expect any money with her, as "she considers her face her fortune." (Handwriting very fair.)

LYDIA SCRAY.—To make ground rice *blanc-mangé*: Ingred.—4 lb. of ground rice, 3 oz. of loaf sugar, 1 oz. of fresh butter, 1 quart of milk, flavouring of lemon-peel, essence of almonds, or laurel leaves, according to taste. Mix the rice with half a pint of the milk, the remainder with the other ingredients, put into a saucepan, and when boiling stir in the rice, and boil for ten minutes; grease a mould with salad-oil, pour in the rice, and when set, it will easily turn out. It is better to make it the day before required. Before sending to table, garnish with jam, or any compote of fruit.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ALPHONSO is responded to by—"Edith," who would not object to a year's courtship. "Edith" is of medium height, generally looking, and domesticated.

S. S. by—"Kate" and "Margaret." Both are blondes, rather tall, pretty, very ladylike, and accomplished in music, French, and Italian; each will have a small fortune when of age.

LIVELY JACK by—"Fair Lily," who will not object to a year's courtship. She is nice looking, under medium height, but has no fortune.

O. P. by—"Laughing Nelly," seventeen, dark, and about 5 ft 2 in. in height.

W. H. S. (a tradesman) by—"Rosa," who is about the age required, rather pretty, very respectable, and of amiable disposition.

W. G. G. by—"Mabel Wallers," who desires his *carré*. J. C. by—"Aurelia" and "Vivian." Both are blondes, very good looking, and accomplished in French and music; and—"Maggie," who rather flippantly says she is decidedly not good looking, and of her disposition he must judge for himself. She cannot find a husband well educated enough, although her own is incomplete.

EDWARD (one of the sons of Neptune) by—"Jenny," nineteen, black curly hair and dark eyes, good tempered; and—"A. G.," twenty, dark hair and eyes, good looking, and just below the middle height.

JEANIE H. by—"Edward L." an officer in the army serving in India, thirty, 5 ft 7 1/2 in. in height, and dark.

FLORENCE by—"Spero," a young gentleman, son of a tradesman, twenty-three, 5 ft 10 in. in height, but not dark, income 150*l.*, a warehouseman, good tempered, and not ugly.

MABEL MAY by—"A Joiner by Trade," nineteen, 5 ft 7 in. in height, light blue eyes, and hair approaching red.

KATE KERSEY by—"H. C.," a widower with four children, thirty-five, 5 ft 7 1/2 in. in height, brown hair, blue eyes, of temperate habits, and very fond of home; and—"Faber Ligal," a countryman, twenty-six, 5 ft 8 in. in height, of a quiet and cheerful, though thoughtful and studious disposition.

KATE SWERTY by—"Freddy," twenty-one, 5 ft 7 in. in height, a good heart, in receipt of 100*l.* per annum, and very fond of home; and—"James M. F." twenty-one, 5 ft 7 1/2 in. in height, fair, and in a good situation with a moderate salary.

JEANIE by—"Charles Robert," twenty-five, 5 ft 7 in. in height, fair, blue eyes, and good looking—"H. Andrew," twenty-three, 5 ft 10 in. in height, dark, good looking, and a sea-going engineer with good prospects, but no fortune; and—"H. C.," twenty-one, who is tall, has dark brown hair, whiskers, and moustache, blue eyes, good temper, fond of home and music, and thinks he could make "Jeanie" happy; has no money, but assures "Jeanie" he is no fortune-hunter.

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BRADEN'S HOUSEHOLD TEA, 3s. Pleasant flavour, abundant strength; 6lb. case, 18s., carriage free to all England.—ALEXANDER BRADEN, 13, High Street, Islington, London.

WHY GIVE MORE?—Excellent TEAS, black, green, and mixed, are now ON SALE, for family use, at 2s. 4d. per lb. at NEWSOM and CO.'S Original Tea Warehouse, 50, Borough. Established A.D. 1745.

THE LONDON LOOKING-GLASS COMPANY'S FIVE-GUINEA LOOKING-GLASS. Several new designs now ready.—A. JENKINS and CO., 167, Fleet Street, and 1, New Road, Brighton. New Design Book free, post-paid.

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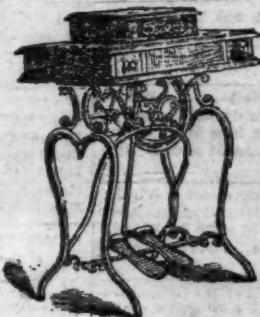
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